

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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JACK WRIGHT AND HIS ELECTRIC TRICYCLE; OR FIGHTING THE STRANGLERS OF THE CRIMSON DESERT. *By "NONAME"*



Over the desert the Flyer sped. The Bedouins saw her, and, startled by the sight, released their victims, who fell to the ground, relieved of the pressure upon their throats.

Bang! Bang! Bang! rattled a volley from Jack's pistols.

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NEW YORK, AUGUST 3, 1903.

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Jack Wright and His Electric Tricycle

OR,

FIGHTING THE STRANGLERS OF THE CRIMSON DESERT.

By "NONAME."

CHAPTER I.

THE UNCRUSHED ACTOR.

"Blast my toplights if it wuzn't jist wonderful!"

"Yah! Und I tink so neider."

"That ere Arab ain't no ordinary man, I'll swear."

"He must haf been ter tuyfel."

"Fust he cut off a man's head, then replaced it, and brung him ter life——"

"Den he put a gal in a baskets, stab it mit a sword, oben it, und she is gone."

"Then he—but's wot's ther use o' tellin' everything he done? Why, it would take all day, and dash my figgerhead if I kin remember everything."

The speaker was a wooden-legged old sailor, in nautical costume, a sandy beard surrounding his jaws, and a glass eye adorning his sunburned face.

His companion was a short, fat, fiery-tempered young Dutchman, with a big stomach, a round, smooth face, watery blue eyes and yellow hair.

They were in a spacious workshop, talking to a dashing-looking young man named Jack Wright, with whom they resided.

He had a powerful figure, dark eyes and hair, sharp features, and was of a bold, adventurous disposition.

Jack laughed at the enthusiasm of his friends.

"The man is only an Arabian conjurer!" he exclaimed, "and I could very easily explain how all the tricks were done if I had time. Then you both liked the performance last night?"

"Ay, ay!" said the sailor. "It wuz startlin'. Ther opera house wuz packed, an' me an' Fritz Schneider had trouble ter git seats."

"Dot vas so," assented the young Dutchman. "You oughder see dot exhibition, Shack. It would frighdened you."

"Who was the trickster, Tim Topstay?" Jack asked the sailor.

"I reckon he calls hisself Abdallah Pasha."

"Does his work constitute the entire show?"

"Nein," hastily said Fritz. "Dere vos some variety actors

also. Von ohf dem vos pully. Dot vos a feller named Benjamin Bings."

"I may go to see the show to-night. I've got some news for you now."

"Wot about?" queried Tim, eagerly.

"Received a letter from Washington," replied Jack. "I'll read it to you."

Tim and Fritz sat down, and Jack drew an envelope from his pocket, from which he took a letter, and began to read as follows:

"Washington, D. C., Oct. 7th, 18—.

"Mr. Jack Wright—Last March the Honorable Edwin Stewart, American consul of Turkey, left the city of Bagdad and made a journey to Arabia, accompanied by a retinue of servants and several friends. His destination was the city of Mecca. The party was attacked on the border of the Robasel-Khagliyah, or Great Sandy Desert, by a gang of Wahhabees. All the servants were strangled to death. Mr. Stewart was carried away into the desert and held for ransom. But one man escaped to tell the tale. He was an American of the name of Benjamin Bings, who had gone to Arabia to learn their art of conjuring. He reached Mecca, and ultimately cabled the disastrous news on here. It was soon verified by a demand from the stranglers of the crimson desert for a large amount of money for the life of Mr. Stewart. If it is not forthcoming within a year of the time he was captured, his dead body will be sent to the American minister in England. Having no confidence in the good faith of his captors, the government has resolved to send a rescuing party after him. A reward of \$50,000 will be paid for the life of Edwin Stewart, and you are hereby requested to consider the proposition. Knowing that you are the inventor of sundry electrical contrivances suitable for travel over land, through water, and by aerial flight, it is proposed that you employ one of your inventions to save this man's life. If you agree to undertake the task, please notify me and I shall send you details of the entire case.

"Yours very truly,

"Henry A. Brisbane,

"Secretary of War."

Tim and Fritz were astounded.

For several moments they were silent.

Jack returned the letter to his pocket.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"I say ter go!" exclaimed Tim.

"Und me neider," added Fritz, energetically.

"I intend to do so," Jack assented. "And here's the very machine we require for such a journey, boys!"

He pointed at a new invention which he and his two friends had built some time previously.

It was an enormous tricycle worked by electricity, which stood in the middle of the big room.

The machine was rather singular in appearance, and was built entirely of the finest and toughest steel procurable.

Over the pivotal front wheel a turret was built, in which the steersman controlled the machine.

It was surrounded by bullet-proof wire-netting, the front was furnished with a strong searchlight and a powerful ram, while inside there was a steering wheel, a number of levers, a compass, and numerous meteorological and electrical instruments.

From a flagpole on top floated the stars and stripes.

There was a steel-clad structure on the two hind wheels, with steps in back and wire-screened windows at the sides.

It was divided inside into three rooms.

The first was a combined sleeping and living room.

The second a combined dining-room and kitchen.

And the third a store-room for provisions, water and supplies.

Beneath the floor of the coach were numerous chemical battery cells of enormous voltage, invented by Jack.

They were coupled to a powerful motor that turned the wheels, operated the electric lights, the air brakes, and did other work.

Each of the huge wheels had extra thick pneumatic tires, capable of standing rough usage a long time.

The entire machine combined extreme lightness in proportion to its size, with extraordinary strength, while, so great was the power of her battery that she had shown a speed on level ground of a mile a minute.

"By thunder, you're right, my hearty!" cried Tim, thumping his wooden leg on the floor, while an excited gleam shot from his good eye. "That ere electric tricycle is jist ther machine fer ther work."

"I tink so neider," added Fritz, with a nod and an excited look, for he was a high tempered fellow. "Und der bestest ting vot you could done vos to dell dot Mr. Brispane dot ve go right away qwick. If soon ve don't half a fight mit somepody, ve don't vos goot for noddings."

Tim took a chew of navy plug.

Then he gave a hitch at his baggy pants and remarked:

"When I wuz aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash in ther navy, we runned a enemy's ship inter a cove. Thar we had her. Every lubber aboard thunk as she couldn't git away. So we took our time about gittin' in firin' range ter blow her ter pieces. Wot wuz ther result? When we did git thar she wuz gone!"

"How could she escape without you seeing her?" demanded Jack, who knew Tim was lying, for he had a habit of making up the most improbable yarns and sprang them on anyone who would listen to him.

"Why," grinned the old sea dog, "yer see, thar wuz a creek in back o' ther cove, wot wound in among ther woods an' runned inter ther sea a mile down ther coast. Ther enemy's ship had gone into it."

"Ah, I see."

"Waal, sir, we couldn't foller, 'cause ther frigate drawed too much water to navigate that shaller stream, so wot d'yer 'pose?"

"I don't know."

"I clumb up a tree, with a forty pound Armstrong gun, an' seein' ther ship sailin' away, I dropped a shot inter her from my elevation an' she wuz blowed ter pieces——"

"Get out! How could you carry a gun up a tree which must have weighed a ton or more?"

"Why, yer see," stammered Tim, turning very red in the face over the way in which Jack had caught him. "Yer see——yer see——"

But that was as far as he got, for Fritz just then began to play a tune on an old accordeon which Tim detested, and the old sailor chased the laughing Dutchman out of the shop.

Tim and Fritz were always at loggerheads over the yarns the sailor invented, and the doleful music the Dutchman played.

Yet they liked each other, and both were devoted to Jack, for he had taken them in when both were poor and homeless, and by going with the young inventor on his adventurous journeys, both had shared his profits and became wealthy.

They were necessary adjuncts to Jack, for the fat fellow was a good cook and a skilled electrician, and Tim was an experienced navigator.

The young inventor had made himself famous at an early age by the invention of various mechanical marvels, and since then had married, and had a young son.

All hands resided in a fine mansion, on the outskirts of the fisher village of Wrightstown, and the workshop stood beside a creek, at the foot of the beautiful garden.

A few moments after Tim and Fritz were gone, Jack heard the electric door-bell ring, and answered it himself, for the shop was always closed against the inquisitive eyes of the public.

Upon the threshold stood two men.

One of them was a tall, bony individual in a black suit, a stove-pipe hat, a profusion of cheap jewelry, kid gloves, and shoe tops of yellow.

He had narrow, clean shaven features, a long nose, long hair, and the dignified air of an uncrushed tragedian.

In a word, he was a variety actor, named Benjamin Bings.

His companion was an Arab in native costume.

He answered to the name of Abdallah Pasha.

Both were the players of whom Tim and Fritz had spoken to Jack.

The Arab was an undersized man, with a dark, reddish complexion, a scanty beard and mustache, jet black hair and eyes, and an aquiline nose.

He wore a long cotton shirt open at the breast, girt with a leathern girdle in which a dagger was thrust.

Across his shoulders a striped cloak of camel's hair was thrown.

A yellow and red striped handkerchief, folded once, covered his head, around which it was kept in place by a twisted hairband.

He wore a pair of open sandals on his feet.

"How de do!" said the bony man to Jack, and he bent his arm, placed his spread fingers on his bosom, and made a sweeping bow. "This is me and me partner, Bings and Pasha, the greatest song and dance team in the profession, and nothing bogus about us—see?"

"Ah!" said Jack with a smile. "The conjurers from the opera house, eh?"

"You bet. We want to see Jack Wright, the inventor, and was told we'd find him out here. Abdallah—that's me partner here—is going to do an electric turn on the boards to-night, and we want to hire a battery to work up the snap—see?"

"I understand. I am Jack Wright——"

"Well, now! How de do? I'm glad to see you, jigger me if I ain't. Shake. I'm sorry, old man, but his heathen jibbers don't polly voo English, so I'll have to do all the chinning for the troupe."

"Can you speak Arabic?"

"Well, now, I should snicker. Haven't I been all through the sandy land? I guess yes. That's where I picked up his nibs and formed the combination. Bings and Pasha, the greatest song and dance team in the perfession, and nothing bogus about us. You'd ought to see us juggle. Oh, mamma. Talk about your Hindoos. They couldn't fake a show like ours, no-how."

"You say your name is Benjamin Bings?"

"Cert. Ever heard of me on the road? Been lithographed and bill-boarded from Jacksonville to Portland, and New York to 'Frisco. I used to do splits and knockabout coon biz with —"

"Ain't you the man who was in Arabia with the Hon. Edwin Stewart at the time he was attacked by the Wahhabees?"

"Well, now, my I be jiggered!" cried Mr. Bings, in astonishment. "Of course I was. How did you hear about it, partner?"

"I will tell you presently," replied Jack. "You are just the man I want to see. Come inside. I have something of vital importance to say to you."

"Lead the way," said the actor.

And accompanied by the stern, unsmiling Arab, he followed Jack into the workshop.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPITEFUL ARAB.

When Jack and his two companions were inside, the strangers glanced around the huge room and at the electric tricycle in amazement.

The apartment was furnished with numerous curious electrical contrivances, and the singular appearance of the Flyer, as the electric tricycle was named, at once held their attention.

"Well! well! well!" exclaimed Mr. Bings. "What the deuce do you call that machine? It's the queerest thing I've ever seen in all my travels. And you can bet that Bings and Pasha have wandered a little bit over the face of this world, I think."

"That," laughed Jack. "Oh, it's a little contrivance of mine with which I intend to go to Arabia and rescue Mr. Stewart."

"May I be jiggered!" exclaimed Mr. Bings in astonishment. "Do you mean to tell me you are going to Arabia with that concern and try to save the Honorable Edwin?"

"Exactly," assented Jack, "and it was to gain your co-operation that I've brought you in here to see the machine."

"What! Me go back to Arabia? Well, I don't think."

"You won't go there with me?"

"Not on your life."

"Don't come to a hasty conclusion."

"Why not?"

"Read this, and you'll see."

Jack handed him the letter.

A look of amazement flitted over the actor's bony face when he finished reading the letter aloud, and he exclaimed:

"Well, now, jigger me if they haven't got me mentioned in it."

"So they have," assented Jack. "And it's very singular that you should meet me this way, isn't it?"

"Very," assented the other, soberly. "It looks like fate."

"Do you notice that \$50,000 clause?"

"That's the very first thing I saw."

"If you join my party there would be four of us among whom to divide that money if we succeed. Your share of the profits would be exactly \$12,500. What do you think of that?"

A startled look flashed over the actor's features.

So much money in a lump was something unheard of in his career, and it brought a yearning feeling into his soul.

"Honest?" he demanded, anxiously.

"I'll give you a contract," said Jack.

"Lord, what a roast."

"Do you want to win it?"

"Do I? Gosh! I'm dead in it."

"Then you'll go?"

"The combination of Bings and Pasha is busted. I'm your hairpin every time, and don't you lose the graft! Let me see that amount again—\$12,500! Oh, ta-rah-rah! Get onto my feelings!"

He danced three or four steps of a shuffle, whooped, flung his hat on the floor, kicked it up to the ceiling, grasped Jack's hand with a fervor that was intense, and shook it like fury.

The Arab stood watching them with an ugly look on his face.

A wrathful scowl kept gathering and intensifying on his brow, a wicked gleam kept distending his eye-balls, and the muscles in his dusky face kept twitching, while the veins stood out like whipcords.

"Traitor!" he suddenly hissed, shaking his clenched fist at the actor; "would you thus desert me?"

"Jack gave a sudden start of surprise.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "I thought you said this man did not understand English?"

The actor looked as smuch surprised as Jack did.

"Jigger me if I knew it before!" he cried.

As he read the letter aloud, it was clear enough now that Abdallah Pasha had heard and understood the meaning of the whole thing.

It had infuriated him against Jack for having been the means of getting Bings away from him.

But the young inventor needed the actor to give him all the details of Stewart's case, and show him where to go and look for the missing consul.

"Well!" demanded the Arab.

"Say!" exclaimed Bings, recovering from his amazement. "You're a sly dog. Here I've been doubling up with you for six months, barnstorming, and you concealed the fact from me that you could talk United States. Pasha, how could you so deceive me?"

"It is not well to tell all one knows," curtly replied the Arab, "and you have been a fool to suppose that I could have traveled in England all these years in the show business without acquiring your language. Again I say, do you mean to desert me?"

"Pon my word, old man, I'll have to. You see, I never made more than ten bones a week out of you, and when a jay comes along with a soft snap of this kind for me I'm in it with hands and feet. Take that scowl off your face and throw it out of the window. On the level, Pasha, you make me tired."

The Arab's eyes flashed.

He saw that the man had made up his mind to leave him.

He turned to Jack with a malignant look, and exclaimed:

"I blame you for this! He was a star attraction. You have weakened my show by taking him away from me."

"My dear fellow," retorted the young inventor, "I think that you are making a great deal of unnecessary fuss over the loss of an actor whom you can easily replace——"

"Not at all!" harshly interposed Abdallah Pasha.

"This man suits my requirements. But he is not obliged to go with me. He is old enough to choose for himself. I had no desire to do you any injury. You are altogether too fiery about a trifling matter. Cool off! Cool off!"

"Jigger me if I ain't feeling bogus!" exclaimed Bings. "I'll make you an offer, Pasha. I'll do a high-class turn at juggling and give a musical make second entrance as an encore for \$500 per. I tell you my stock is booming. Does it .

you feel rocky? That's fair and you'd have to sign articles for a two years' engagement. Now, then, what do you say, me noble duke—what I say goes, d'you see?"

"Are you mad?" growled the Arab.

"Then you ain't on?"

"No."

"That settles it. You give me a very large, nut brown pain. You can't expect me to stick for ten per, Pasha. I'm a dead fly blister, me boy, the gamiest sport in this town, and don't you forget it!"

The Arab choked back an angry retort.

Striding to the door, he paused beside it, and darting a very ugly look at Jack, he hissed in savage tones:

"I'll make you regret undermining me!"

"Don't you threaten me, sir!" replied Jack, with a frown.

"No, I shall not threaten—I'll kill you."

"It seems to me that there is a deeper motive for your resentment than the mere fact of this man leaving you to improve his luck," exclaimed Jack, in significant tones. "You scarcely have grounds enough for such rage as to threaten my life for having deprived you of an actor."

Abdallah started slightly.

Then, as quick as a flash, he replied:

"You are keen. You have divined the truth. I will give you warning that your expedition into the Crimson Desert will be impossible."

"Ah!" exclaimed Jack. "I thought you was interested in that project. Proceed, sir, and tell me why."

"Because I shall prevent it," replied the man, sharply.

"Bosh! What interest have you in my expedition?"

"I will tell you. I am of the Wahhabee tribe. Into the interior of our sacred desert white man has never, and will never set foot and return alive. The oaths of our religion prohibit it. Knowing, as I do, that you propose going there, it is my duty to prevent your carrying out your purpose."

"Forewarned, forearmed!" muttered Jack.

"Remember!" exclaimed the Arab, warningly.

He then turned toward the door to take his departure, when when it flew open suddenly and struck him with a bang in the face.

Abdallah uttered a wild yell, and tottered back.

It was Tim who had flung open the door and stumped in.

With a tigerish look upon his face, the infuriated Arab pulled the dagger from his girdle and sprang at the old sailor.

Like an assassin he reached Tim in back.

Grasping him by the collar, the Arab raised the dagger to stab the old sailor, when Jack bounded forward.

He saw murder—cold, cruel intended murder in the Arab's eyes, and he hauled off and dealt the rascal a stunning blow that knocked him flat on his back.

"Lord save us!" gasped Tim. "Wot wuz ther lubber a-doin'?"

"Trying to put a knife in your back," replied Jack.

"Blast his ugly figger-head, I'll——"

"Look out!" yelled Bings, interrupting the sailor.

Abdallah had jumped to his feet.

All the venom in his nature was aroused, and he rushed at Jack, clutching the gleaming knife in his hand, and made a pass at him.

The blade would have ripped the young inventor open had not the warning cry of the actor caused him to jump aside just in time to avoid it.

As it was, the blade pierced Jack's coat and gashed it.

Before the Arab could recover the use of his weapon, the young inventor reached him and began to punch him.

Biff!

Bang!

Thump!

—h!

The blows fell like rain.

Ducking his head and raising his arms to fend off the blows, the Arab yelled and jabbered in his native tongue, in the meantime recoiling toward the door.

As soon as he had a chance he fled precipitately, followed by a parting kick from Jack that raised him from the ground.

"Take that and get out!" cried Jack.

Away dashed the Arab as fast as his legs would carry him, and crossing the yard, he reached the street and disappeared.

"Holy poker!" gasped Tim. "May I be blowed if that cuss ain't ther wust willian wot I ever seed in all my born days!"

"I say, old man," remarked Bings at this juncture, "you want to keep your eye open now. That hamfatter ain't got no more regard for human life than a bear. He's got you lithographed in his mind, and once he gets dead sore on a man, that individual's name is Mud—see?"

"Oh, I don't fear him," carelessly replied Jack. "You and he are quits now. I'm glad I've got you away from him."

"Yes, but I'm on my uppers," said Bings, ruefully, "and I might as well be stranded in Bulgaria, and walk the sleepers for New York, as to land here without a sou-markee."

"Don't let that worry you, for I'll see you through," the young inventor replied.

"Will you?" eagerly asked Bings, as the anxious expression left his face. "That relieves me. What's a chump to do with his wad gone and everything in soak on which he can raise a silver doughnut? Is it a go that we're to work Arabia?"

"Of course we are, and pending our journey there you can reside here with me. I'll depart in a week."

"Well, now, that's what knocks. You're a dandy, Jack Wright, and nothing bogus about you, either."

Jack questioned him closely about his journey through the wilds of Arabia with Mr. Stewart, and soon gained all the information he wanted.

No sooner was he thus informed when Fritz excitedly rushed in.

"Lieber Gott!" he yelled, wildly. "Dot Arap's seded fire to der house."

A thrill of horror passed over everyone at this announcement.

The vindictive Arab had begun to avenge himself with no delay in a fearful manner.

CHAPTER III.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

Everyone rushed from the shop and saw the lower part of the house in a mass of flames.

"Fritz, follow the Arab!" shouted Jack.

He then dashed into the house, and his fat friend hastened away in an effort to capture the incendiary.

Jack rushed into his library, followed by Tim and Bings.

Here a number of red bottles stood in a rack on the wall.

They were filled with a liquid compound of Jack's own invention, which formed vast volumes of gas when exposed to the air.

This gas was calculated to smother the flames.

Seizing the bottles, the young inventor and his companions hastened into the back kitchen.

Here they saw that an oil tank had been opened.

Its contents flowed out upon the floor, saturating the wood, and thus rendering it highly combustible.

The flames had gained a strong hold upon the house and now threatened its entire destruction.

But no sooner were the glass bottles hurled at the fire when

a vaporish cloud arose, a peculiar odor filled the heated air, and the flames vanished like magic.

In a few moments not a vestige of the fire remained, but the blackened carpets and wood work and a dense cloud of smoke.

Jack's wife, Viola, with their child and servants, had rushed from the house by the front door, and a large crowd of people swiftly assembled in the street.

But as soon as the young inventor announced that the fire was extinguished and the danger past, the crowd dispersed and the occupants of the house returned.

In a short time Fritz came back.

He met Jack in the hall.

"Dot Arap vos got away!" he exclaimed in disgust.

"Couldn't you find him?"

"Nein. Den I vent me by der Obera House, und vot you tink?"

"I don't know—what?"

"He vos been dere before me, und gief orders dot all der tings vot he own dere been solt, he bay his pills und vented away."

"Then he means to break up his show?"

"Sure. Vot you tink—dot he stay der bis you got him arrested? Oh, no! Ve vos too shmart for dot. Vell, now, ve nefer got him."

"Oh, we'll see him again," grimly answered Jack. "A fellow that is so spiteful would not go away without trying to keep his threat. He has a potent reason for keeping us away from Arabia. He is a member of the tribe who have got the consul in their power. Consequently, if Stewart is ransomed, he would share in the profit."

Jack then went out.

He left orders to have the house put in repair.

Upon his return he met Tim, Fritz and the actor in the yard.

"I've posted the police to keep watch for the Arab," said he, "and if he is caught they'll put him in jail."

"Ay, now, that's ther best way," said Tim.

"We can do nothing further for the present," said Jack, "so if you like I'll take the Flyer out and try her."

"By all means, my boy," assented Mr. Bings, eagerly. "I'm just aching to see how she goes, and, on the level, it'll be a regular matinee for me."

Tim and Fritz were both anxious to test the electric tricycle again.

She had not been completed long, and after all the time, money and trouble they had to construct the machine, all were on the ragged edge of suspense to see if she was positively a success.

Accordingly they returned to the shop.

It was then late in the afternoon.

Opening the doors, a workman admitted them.

They boarded the Flyer by the rear steps and entered the store-room, which was then empty.

So were the other two rooms, as the Flyer was not yet equipped for use beyond the barest necessities for operating her.

Jack raised a trap in the floor.

In the compartment beneath were the cells of battery, sealed up hermetically, and joined in series by insulated copper wires.

These wires ran to the pilot-house.

Here they were bound to the switches, and other conducting wires ran back from the switches to the motors for driving the machinery which revolved the big wheels.

Filling the lubricating cups, and finding all the wire joints to be in order, Jack passed out the front door.

Here a small railed walk communicated with the turret, and they crossed over and assembled in the pilot-house.

Jack turned one of the levers.

It put the electric current into communication with the motor, and as soon as the armatures began to spin the machinery started, and the wheels revolved.

The Flyer rolled ahead.

Jack grasped the wheel and steered her.

The tricycle rolled out of the shop noiselessly and swiftly, her machinery operating at a low voltage.

Reaching the street, Jack said:

"There's a fine, hard, macadamized road running parallel with the railroad tracks. I'm going to send her along there to see what speed we can get out of her."

"Yust der ting!" assented Fritz.

"Talk about actors attracting lots of attention! Why, we ain't in it with this machine!" exclaimed Mr. Bings, jealously, as he pointed out the open front.

Hundreds of people came running from all directions to get a view of Jack's new invention.

In a few minutes both sides of the road were lined with a vast assemblage, who watched the Flyer with the keenest interest, as she rolled along.

Shouts greeted our friends upon all sides, handkerchiefs were waved by the ladies, and cheers ran along the lines.

The noise and excitement kept drawing more people to the spot every moment.

"Bless my soul!" remarked Tim. "We're gittin' a reg'ler ovation."

At this moment several members of the theatrical company caught a view of Benjamin Bings, and a howl arose.

An actor whose clothes looked like an explosion in a paint factory pointed excitedly at Jack's new found friend, and yelled:

"Bings! By thunder, Bings!"

"Hello, Ignatius McSwiney," affably bawled the new acquisition. "I'm proud to see you! Ah there, Pete—how do you like my new fangled perambulator? How do, Mr.—"

But just then Jack interrupted him by uttering a stifled cry.

"There goes Abdallah Pasha."

"Whar is he?" roared Tim, starting forward.

"Shiminey Christmas—he's runnin'!" bawled Fritz, excitedly.

The Arab had seen them.

He rushed toward the railroad depot.

In a minute more they saw him clamber upon a locomotive that stood puffing on a side track.

The Arab leveled a revolver at the engineer's head, and the man was seen to start the locomotive ahead under compulsion.

"Why, he's stealing a locomotive to get away," cried Jack.

"Donner und blitzen! After him—after him!" roared Fritz.

"I don't dare yet. We'd run over someone."

"Cl'ar ther way thar!" yelled Tim out the window.

Before his repeated yelling the people scattered right and left, and the young inventor soon was able to pull the lever over further and get up speed.

In the meantime the locomotive had run out upon the main track, and went roaring away, with the Arab in the cab, and the engineer in danger of his life from the pistol with which Abdallah menaced him.

While the Flyer was retarded by the people who had been in her way, the locomotive gained rapid headway.

By the time the tricycle reached the road, Jack had spoken of, the locomotive was two miles ahead of her.

There was a magnificent stretch ahead of the Flyer.

"We can test her now for all she's worth, boys!" cried Jack. "I am going to overtake that engine if such a thing be possible."

"Do you think you can do it?" anxiously asked Bings.

"Yes. We've got a fifteen mile road ahead of us, as level as this is all the way. Here she goes!"

He pulled the battery lever over.

Under extra electro-motive force, the tricycle shot

swiftly, and a streak of lurid electric sparks flew off the machinery.

Away she flew with wonderful speed.

In a few moments she was going as fast as the locomotive.

Then Jack drew the lever over further.

More power was added.

Her speed increased.

She went along so fast they held their breath.

Then she gained on the engine.

For the last time Jack moved the lever to the last notch.

The pace she set was terrific.

Her wheels whirled so fast that the nickel plated pointers took on the appearance of glistening solid plates of metal.

A cloud of fine dust arose and streamed behind her.

The fat rubber tires made no noise, but the motor fairly buzzed and the rods clanged from the awful rapidity at which they were moving.

She rapidly gained on the flying locomotive then.

"Holy Moses!" gasped Bings, his eyes fairly bulging and his hair standing on end. "This is frightful. I say, there, mild up, will you? Suppose the wheels fly off?"

"They can't," replied Jack.

"See! See! We're gainin' fast," Tim roared, delightedly.

"Yah! But looker dot Arap!" groaned Fritz.

He pointed at the cab of the engine.

Abdallah and the engineer were struggling.

It was a mad fight for life and liberty, and both men were strong and determined to win.

There was a train far ahead of the flying locomotive, into which the engineer feared the locomotive would crash.

He wanted to slacken speed.

Abdallah was frenzied by the approach of the Flyer.

He would not allow the engineer to do as he wished.

The result was a terrible fight for the pistol.

Nearer and still nearer to the engine drew the tricycle, and a shout of alarm escaped our friends.

Abdallah had pushed the engineer out the cab door, but in falling the man clung tenaciously to the Arab.

In a moment more down to the ground they fell.

"They're off the engine!" cried Jack, as he saw them strike the ground beside the railroad track.

"Stop her and we'll collar him!" yelled Tim.

"No! no! We cannot—must not!"

"Why?"

"Look at the train ahead."

"Great Cæsar!" groaned Bings.

"In a few minutes the locomotive will reach the train—crash into it—telescope—smash or wreck the train—kill, wound and injure the passengers, and create a fearful catastrophe."

"Mein Gott! How ve can stop dot?" groaned Fritz in dismay.

"Only by overtaking the engine with this tricycle, get aboard and shut off steam inside of a few moments."

"Try it!" shouted Bings, earnestly.

"I will, and with God's aid, I'll save those poor people."

Past the two fallen men flew the electric tricycle like a flash, and along she went racing after the engine.

The train ahead was now in plain sight, and the locomotive was swiftly bearing down upon it.

The race for life was terrible, but Jack remained cool and collected at the wheel, and never flinched for a moment.

Then there sounded a report like a pistol shot.

Suddenly the front of the Flyer seemed to go down.

"The front tire has burst!" shouted Jack.

"Gee whiz! That settles it!" groaned the old sailor.

Already he imagined that he could see the locomotive crash into the passenger train ahead—visions filled his mind of the wreck—the loss of life and limb, and he turned very pale.

But while this grim idea shot through his mind, Jack had jumped upon the window sill and leaped for the locomotive.

The accident had slackened the tricycle's speed, and the engine was pulling ahead of her swiftly.

For a moment it seemed as if the young inventor's efforts were in vain, as the locomotive darted away from his outstretched hands.

But he caught hold.

His fingers touched the edge of the tender.

There he hung for a moment until he got a firmer grip.

Exerting all his muscle, he swung one leg up, got his head over the edge, pulled his body upward and got on the coal.

No sooner was he upon his feet when he caught sight of the flying train ahead.

It was only one hundred yards away.

A yell of delight escaped Jack's friends.

Looking back he saw them stop the disabled tricycle.

Then he rushed for the locomotive cab, and grasped the throttle.

Quickly shutting off steam, he slackened the speed of the machinery, and the throbbing, puffing and straining of the locomotive became greatly diminished.

He dared not put on the brakes then.

Had he done so the wheels would have slid over the polished rails as if they were skates on ice.

Still the roaring engine plunged rapidly ahead, and lessened the distance between her cowcatcher and the rear car of the train.

Jack kept his glance fixed intently ahead.

Up to the train crept the locomotive.

Presently but a few feet separated them.

Then Jack put on the brakes.

Most of the momentum was gone.

The wheels slid, and the locomotive continued on.

She met the car, and there sounded a heavy bump.

The coupling pin was broken, but no further damage was done, and the locomotive recoiled and was left behind.

As the train ran ahead and the speed of the locomotive diminished, leaving her far behind, the passengers and brakemen were seen to look back.

They saw what struck them.

But the danger was past.

Jack had saved the train.

Presently the locomotive stopped.

Reversing the wheels, Jack sent her back to his friends.

So well did he understand the mechanism of the engine that he could run it as well as an experienced engineer.

He found Tim and Fritz patching the bursted tire.

They cheered him lustily when they saw him bring back the locomotive without any injury.

"Safe?" demanded Bings.

"Yes," he replied, cheerily.

"I thought yer'd fail, lad," said Tim.

"How about the Flyer?"

"Her wheel must a hit somethin' wot cut it."

"Can you mend it well enough to return?"

"It's mended already, my hearty."

"Then inflate it and run her to Wrightstown."

"Ay, ay. Are you going ter take ther engine back?"

"Yes. Keep a lookout for the engineer and the Arab."

In a few minutes the tricycle was ready and started off beside the locomotive, and they ran slowly for the village.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVING SCORES OF LIVES.

Up near the runaway locomotive rushed the electric tricy-

When they reached the spot where Abdallah and the engineer had fallen from the train, they discovered that the juggler was missing, but the engineer sat on the ground nursing a broken arm.

Jack stopped the locomotive.

"Hello there!" he cried.

"Great guns! How did you catch her?" asked the astonished man.

"Overtook her with that electric tricycle."

"Is that so?"

"Where's the Arab?"

"Hang me if I know."

"You don't know?"

"No. He vanished while I was senseless."

"Ah! I understand. Your arm is hurt, I see."

"Broken by our fall. I landed underneath."

"We saw the whole occurrence."

"Do you know why the Arab tackled me?"

"Yes. He wanted to escape arrest when we chased him."

"He threatened to shoot me if I refused to carry him away."

"Get aboard here and we'll go back to Wrightstown."

The engineer complied.

When they reached the village Jack left the engine.

Boarding the Flyer, he was carried back to the shop.

Here, while discussing what had transpired, they repaired the tire properly and put it in as good condition as it ever was.

"After this experience with us," said Jack, "it is not at all likely that Abdallah Pasha will pester us again."

"I tink so neider," assented Fritz.

"But he's a spiteful jay," remarked the actor.

"Fer my part," said Tim, "I don't reckon he'll stay in this country now."

It almost seemed as if Tim was a prophet.

On the following day Jack received a letter from the Arab.

It said:

"Jack Wright—When you read this I will be aboard of a vessel on the ocean going back to Arabia. Follow me at your peril. I shall warn my friends of your intentions. If you should fall into our hands you will perish. No earthly power shall wrest the prisoner of the desert men from them.

"Abdallah Pasha."

Jack showed the letter to his friends.

"He means to interfere with our work!" exclaimed Jack.

"Jigger me if this ain't tough!" groaned Bings, dolefully.

"Vas yer letted dot letters stop yer?" demanded Fritz.

"Not much! The Flyer has proven herself to be a fine machine, answering all our requirements for the journey. She has shown remarkable speed; I am well pleased with her. I am not frightened by that rascal's threat. If necessary I'll penetrate the very heart of the Arabian desert with her, despite every effort of those villains to baffle me."

"Hooray!" roared Tim; "that's ther talk."

"I've sent out my orders for equipments already. By Saturday everything will be ready," said Jack.

After that the machine was tested again.

She proved so satisfactory that they could find no fault.

Having taken her apart, they packed her away in a number of cases, and did the same with the supplies.

Necessary outfits were procured.

By the end of a week everything was in readiness for departure.

It had been decided to leave next day.

The four adventurers sat down to a game of cards that night in Jack's cozy library, and during the game Bings remarked:

"Say now, it's pretty tough ter wake up with fur on your tongue and a sort of 'He-Never-Cares-to-Wander' taste in your mouth, to say nothing of a beastly swelled head, ain't it?"

"Been splicin' the main brace?" asked Tim, with a grin.

"Verily, I must admit that I hit the bug juice hard," admitted Mr. Bings, with a wry face. "But that's the way. A fellow goes out to get a ball, and he meets a few kindred spirits, when all at once he gets a paralytic twist in his optic nerve, and his legs go back on him."

"Drinkin' grog's a mighty poor business," said Tim, solemnly, as he took a chew of navy plug. "It recalls ter my mind a leetle incident wot once happened ter me when I wuz aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash in ther navy. Yer see——"

"What a lie! What a lie!"

"Eh?" growled Tim, bridling up. "Who said that?"

"Rats, old man—rats! Ho—ho—ho! Crack—er."

"It's Bismarck," said Jack, pointing at a big green parrot.

The bird belonged to Fritz, and was perched on the back of a chair.

The Dutchman had caught it on the African coast, and educated it to the highest degree of perfection attainable in a parrot.

"Blast yer timbers!" growled Tim. "Dry up now! As I wuz a-sayin', we wuz sailin' along a dangerous coast one dark, stormy night, an' I wuz down below, when I found a cask o' rum, an' bored a hole in it. Then I laid flat on my back under ther hole an' let ther liquor run inter my open mouth till I wuz so full of it that if I turned over on my face I'd a-lost it all. Waal, sir, I got blind, stavin', goggle-eyed drunk, an' went up ter take my trick at ther wheel——"

"How I wish I could have been there," regretfully sighed Mr. Bings.

"Ter continer: I hadn't been thar long afore ther sea suddenly opened, an' out o' it flew a snake ten miles long. 'You're three sheets in ther wind, Tim,' it yelled at me. Then its cry was taken up on all sides. Out o' ther sky flew more of 'em, an' they rushed at me with open mouths from which fire was pourin' like lightnin'. I looked aroun', an' ther deck wuz covered with more o' them——"

"Oh, Lord, what a case of jim-jams," chuckled Bings.

"Waal, sir, thar wuz big red bull frogs, fiery-dragons, green lizards, blue pollywogs, an' white eels among 'em, an' they all wuz rushin' fer me. I knowed as I'd have ter git ther best o' them, or they'd chew me up, an' founder ther ship. Now, wot d'yer s'pose I went an' done ter save ourselves."

"Got over the crimson jag you had on."

"No, sir. Yer wrong. I got an ax. Then I chased 'em. Right an' lef' I struck out. Down they fell in squirmen' masses all over. In a few minutes I killed a thousan' o' them. One big feller flew away an' I chased him. He made me run five miles afore I caught him."

"How the deuce could you run five miles if you were on a ship?"

"Oh!" gasped Tim, with a start. "I fergot. Waal, never mind. Ter make a long story short, while I wuz a-chasin' them blue devils an' pink animiles, ther ship run aground. I found myself lyin' on my back under the wheel. Ther commander wuz a-kickin' blazes outer me. Now wot d'yer think? I had fallen asleep an' dreamed it."

"Didn't you see any pea-green monkeys with yellow tails and purple eyes?"

"Lordy! I—— Oh, gosh, what's this?"

"One of them!" yelled Bings, and Tim flew out of his chair.

A monkey had rushed into the room, bounced up on top of Tim's head, and hung onto his scanty locks of hair like grim death.

Tim was startled and horrified.

He gave a gasp—a yell—and a plunge that carried him out of the room, and his friends burst out laughing.

"It was Whiskers, his pet monkey," chuckled Jack.

Tim had captured the little beast at the same time and place that Fritz had got his parrot, and both of these creatures had

always gone with their owners on the trips they made with Jack in the past.

A deadly enmity existed between Bismarck and Whiskers, which frequently found vent in various fights.

Tim's sudden departure broke up the game.

Our friends then retired for the night.

Next morning they departed from Wrightstown, taking the parrot and monkey with them.

The Flyer and all their effects were taken aboard of a steamer bound for the Mediterranean Sea, and they departed.

An uneventful voyage followed.

In due time they arrived in Egypt.

From Alexandria another vessel carried them to Arabia.

Here they debarked with all their effects on the coast of the southern part of the Red Sea.

Opening their boxes, they put the Flyer together, and having placed all her stores aboard, they started her off on their dangerous hunt for the abducted consul.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEMONS OF THE DESERT.

The moon and stars gleamed down from a serene, cloudless sky upon a sandy plain ahead of the Flyer.

Slowly plodding along across the sea of sand went a train of camels and Arabs, clearly outlined against the blue sky.

Some of the natives, in their picturesque costumes, were mounted on the camels' backs, some walked beside the burdened animals, others strode ahead, while the rest brought up the rear.

Along in single file they silently wended their way, no air moving, and a drowsy warmth filling the atmosphere.

The caravan was about a mile away to the eastward of the dense shrubbery through which the tricycle was going.

Jack stood in the turret, steering.

He watched the travelers in silence, and the door opened, the old sailor entered, and catching sight of them, he remarked:

"We've got company, I see."

"Yes; a band of merchants, with goods, going to Bagdad."

"How different from our way of carryin' things."

"It's peculiar to this country, Tim. Here civilization never advances. Centuries have passed in which the adjoining countries have crept into something like advancement. In Arabia everything is as primitive as it was before the flood."

"Wot's that tiny cloud o' dust yonder?"

"Someone coming from the north."

They watched the dust cloud intently with their binoculars. It gradually grew larger every moment.

Presently they discerned a band of horsemen.

There were fifty in the party, all mounted on magnificent nejdies, and armed with long lances that gleamed in the moonlight.

"Bedouins!" exclaimed Jack, as soon as he saw them.

"Wot's them?" queried Tim, curiously.

"Usually shepherds. But they are great thieves as well."

"Ain't they tackin' arter them travelers?"

"Yes—no doubt of it. They regard the plundering of caravans as simply a measure that takes the place of passports or custom duties exacted elsewhere. They claim the land is theirs, and that trespassers on it must pay them a forfeit. To cross the desert we must pay a Bedouin sheik, who grants a pass by sending two or more men of his tribe to accompany the travelers to the next encampment. There fresh guides are bound to afford a safe-guard against attack. Without

taking these precautions, a rash man will lose his luggage or his life."

"Rather a free-an'-easy way o' doin' business."

"Yes. Just watch those poor fellows with the camels trying to escape."

They were urging their clumsy ships of the desert along with word and blows, but made very slow progress.

The Bedouins rapidly bore down on them.

"It is clear that the travelers have no guides!" said Jack.

"How do yer know?" queried Tim.

"If they had, they would not try to escape."

"Then they're in danger o' thar lives?"

"Assuredly."

"Are you a-goin ter le' them git killed?"

"Not if I can prevent it. Call Fritz and Bings."

The old sailor stumped out.

Jack saw the wild riders draw closer to the Bedouins.

Along swept the yelling horde, their cloaks and head bands streaming out behind, and their spears glinting in the moonlight.

Moving like a vast billow on the ocean, they rushed along, half buried in a cloud of dust.

Faintly over the desert came their wild, blood-curdling yells, and a feeling of deep compassion for the poor travelers overwhelmed Jack as he saw their frantic and futile efforts to escape.

Just then he saw his friends in the coach arming themselves with pneumatic repeating rifles, the bullets of which were loaded like torpedoes with an explosive powder.

"All ready?" he shouted, closing the windows.

"Go ahead," replied Tim.

Jack steered the electric tricycle out upon the desert from the midst of the shrubbery.

Pulling one of the levers, he sent the electric current streaming from the searchlight in a blinding glare far ahead.

Away flew the Flyer over the sand like an avalanche.

By this time the Bedouins were coming up with their intended victims very fast, and the light flooded them.

Startled by its rays, they glared toward the tricycle, and the yell they uttered pealed loudly on the silent desert.

"They see us!" muttered Jack.

"Ay, ay; we've scared 'em!" Tim added.

"Jigger me if they haven't stopped!" cried Bings.

"But dey don'd run avay for a cent's vort." Fritz exclaimed.

They were obstinate and plucky barbarians.

Their pause was only momentary.

As soon as they recovered they dashed toward the caravan again.

"Relentless rascals!" muttered Jack.

"Very," assented the actor. "Plunder is their determination."

"Shiminey Christmas! day vos firin' deir spears."

"Let's give 'em a broadside, my hearty."

"Fire one volley to check them. Aim for the horses."

No sooner was the order given, when the weapons were protruded through the loopholes in the windows and fired.

Down went three of the steeds.

No reports came from the rifles, only a thud of air.

But the bullets burst with loud reports.

Their destructive power was tremendous.

The Flyer now rushed up in close proximity to the natives under Jack's guiding hand.

Its great long steel ram was aimed for the midst of the crowd.

A tremendous yell arose from the Bedouins as it charged upon them, and they made an attempt to scatter.

Before the entire horde could do so the ram struck the leg of one of them, pierced it, plunged into the animal and after

pinning the shrieking man to his brute, it pushed him along ahead, while everyone rushed to the right and left.

Along plunged the machine through the entire crowd, and when she cleared them, Jack stopped her suddenly.

Then she was reversed.

It drew the deadly ram from its double living sheath.

Horse and rider fell to the ground.

Around swung the Flyer, and the Arabs, turning on the bare backs of their animals, hurled a volley of spears at her.

They were remarkably clever with these weapons.

Everyone thus flung struck her.

"Look out!" yelled Jack to his friends.

His warning was needless—they had closed the windows.

The vehicle was impenetrable.

The weapons struck her all over.

Some were snapped in two and others glanced off.

None could penetrate her metal sides, and a shout of derision escaped her inmates upon seeing this.

All the Bedouins were furious.

Three of them had been dismounted.

Some distance away the caravan had paused.

The men gazed in wonder at their singular champion, and marveled at what it was.

"Stand ready!" cried Jack.

Then he drove the machine toward them.

The blinding glare of the searchlight flashing in their eyes prevented them from being able to see the tricycle.

Filled with sudden dismay, they dashed away.

Loud and fierce their voices rang out, as they urged their steeds along, and in a moment the whole terrified band was in motion.

Up went a cloud of dust around them.

An exciting race began.

While they were flying southward at full tilt, the caravan that Jack saved set out to the northward in double-quick time to take advantage of the diversion in their favor.

"Shall we fire a volley arter 'em, lad?" bawled Tim.

"No. I only want to drive them away," replied the young inventor.

"Donnervetter! Der vuns vot ve dismounded vos on der backs ohf der horses mit deir friendts!" said Fritz.

"Well, now," ejaculated Bings, "that looks pretty. Say, old man, can't you overtake them? On the level, we are going dead slow."

"Oh, yes, I can overhaul them easily enough, but I don't want to," replied Jack. "I'll drive them off a few miles."

The Flyer had ranged up close behind the horses.

Now and then a fierce, defiant yell pealed from the Bedouins as they glanced back and saw that they kept their lead.

All hands imagined their horses were more than a match for the flying tricycle, and took courage.

Jack, however, had merely graded the speed of the electric motor to accord with that of the horses.

A mass of fine, sandy dust flew up from the wheels of the tricycle as she swept along, and mile after mile was covered.

In the distance a dark, dim spot was seen.

As they drew nearer to it, the object assumed the form of an oasis, and the Arabs headed toward it.

Upon a nearer approach, Jack observed that it was a rocky place several acres in extent.

It was densely overgrown with shrubbery, date palms and fig trees, while from the midst of a mass of towering rocks there trickled a brackish stream of water.

The vegetation of that arid district owed its origin to the water, and the Arabs evidently expected to find refuge there, for they headed their rushing horses directly toward it.

Fritz entered the turret.

"Fools! Dey tink ve don't could foller dem dere!" he growled.

"They must have some potent purpose in view for heading for the place," replied Jack, wondering what it was.

In a few moments the foremost rider reached an opening among the rocks, and vanished from view.

His companions swiftly followed him.

Along plunged the tricycle in hot pursuit.

"You vos foller dem in?" anxiously asked Fritz.

"To be sure," assented Jack.

"Loog oud for dreacheries."

"Don't alarm yourself."

"Dere. Der last vun vos gone."

"And here we are at the opening."

Jack saw that the entrance was clear.

He steered the tricycle through at full speed.

Within he observed a large circular space.

In the middle the spring bubbled up, and flooded the sand at one side to a depth of a few inches.

All the Bedouins were on the other side of it.

Whether they had made a detour of the spring and pool Jack did not know, but it was apparent that the Flyer could easily go through the shallow pond.

By so doing he would not be obliged to make the detour.

Accordingly, the young inventor steered the tricycle for the pond, and kept her flying ahead.

She presently reached it.

Into the water she dashed.

A shower of it flew up in the air from the spinning wheels.

Across she headed, but not ten yards were traversed when all at once the wheels began to bind.

Jack stopped them and peered out.

As he did so, he was given a severe nervous shock.

"Good heavens!" he gasped, "the villains have lured us into a bed of quicksand."

The wheels were even then sinking into the treacherous and tenacious grasp of the quicksand.

Jack's exclamation was heard by his friends, and a feeling of intense dismay took possession of them.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE IN THE OASIS.

The treacherous quicksand held the three wheels of the Flyer as rigidly as if they were welded to the ground.

If Jack had not stopped the wheel's revolutions the force of the current would have broken the machinery.

A yell of delight pealed from the Bedouins when they saw how the tricycle was caught.

They kept at a safe distance, and finally crossed the inclosure to a large tree, which stood alone among a heap of stones and rocks.

Here they dismounted.

A long, branchless limb of the tree, with a fork at the end, pointed toward the Flyer, and one of the Arabs fastened a strong line to the end of it, carried the line up across a crotch above and dropped the end of the rope down on the other side.

Several of his companions seized the rope and began to pull upon it, whereupon the long branch was bent up and backward.

There was a tremendous spring in the bent limb.

To the end of it a large heap of stone was fastened in a fork.

No sooner was this done when the men let go the rope. There sounded a loud swish, the limb flew back to its natural position, and acting like a sling it hurled the heavy stone like a cannon ball toward the entrapped tricycle.

Through the air shot the missile with fearful velocity, and

In a moment or two it struck the side of the Flyer with a bang that could be heard a great distance away.

A huge dent was knocked in the metal plate and the vehicle swayed on her springs and would have gone over had not her wheels held her firmly where she was.

With a shout of triumph over the success of the shot the wild riders began to prepare another missile.

Jack and his companions were startled.

They were in a very dangerous position now, for there was every prospect of the Bedouins battering the Flyer to pieces with their strange weapon.

The worst of it was, they could not move the tricycle out of the way.

In this crisis they all turned appealingly to Jack.

"What are we to do?" asked Bings.

"Can you reach them with your rifles?"

"No. The rocks protect them too well."

"Then we must get out of her upon solid ground."

"Dey shoos us down if we do," remonstrated Fritz.

"Oh, no. Haven't we got our metal suits?"

"Dot vos so. But how we got aground?"

"By means of a line. Tim, do you see that rock?"

"Ther one on ther edge o' ther quicksand?"

"Yes. See if you can lasso it."

The old sailor procured a strong manila line, and making a noose in the end, he flung it for the rock.

The first cast proved successful.

A the noose settled over the rock he pulled it taut, and Jack secured the end of the line to the front of the Flyer.

All hands hastened into the store-room.

Here a number of metal suits hung, looking like the mail worn by ancient knights.

They were made of bullet proof aluminum scales.

Each one put on a suit.

They then armed themselves.

While so engaged a second rock came flying through the air.

It struck the top of the turret with a report like a gunshot, and glancing off, without doing much damage, fell into the water.

Jack and his companions rushed up forward.

They instantly saw what occurred.

"Follow me!" exclaimed the young inventor, energetically. "We cannot stand much more of a bombardment like that!"

And so saying, he swung himself out the window to the sand, grasped the rope, and hastened toward terra firma.

Every step he took his feet sank in the sand, but by dint of hanging on to the rope, he kept himself on the top.

In this manner he reached solid ground.

His comrades quickly followed him.

No sooner were they safely landed when a third rock came howling through the air toward them.

It flew over the tricycle, shot between them, struck the ground with a terrific bang, and was buried out of sight.

It made the four shudder.

Had it come a few inches nearer, one of them would have perished.

"Who's got the grenades!" demanded Jack.

"Here dey vos," replied Fritz.

He handed over several bombs.

They were loaded with Jack's high explosive.

"Grasp the rope and haul!" he exclaimed.

His friends obeyed.

Jack then hurled several of the bombs at the sand.

They burst in front of the sunken wheels with reports like mucketry, and blew up the sand in showers.

In this manner the clutch upon the wheels was relaxed for a moment, and as the three were hauling on the line, they dragged the tricycle toward them.

As soon as she was upon the surface, her wheels ran over the sand swiftly, and she reached hard soil.

At this juncture, however, the Bedouins had seen what was transpiring, and springing upon their horses, they came clattering toward the four.

"On guard!" shouted Jack. "They are coming!"

Releasing the rope, the four prepared for action, and as the Arabs dashed up to them, they began firing.

Shot after shot burst among the dusky thieves, and several of them fell.

But the horses pressed on.

In a moment more they surrounded the adventurers.

Lances and crooked swords were aimed at the gallant four, and blows were dealt that would have killed, had not our friends been protected by their armor.

The chief of the band singled out Jack and rode him down.

Up went his lance, and the point struck the young inventor on the breast with tremendous force, sending him staggering.

In another instant the shoeless hoofs of the small gray horse were pawing the air over the inventor's head.

Down they came upon him, and he was knocked flat, while the animal leaped over him, and ran on.

Tim, Fritz and Bings were each menaced by half a dozen of the savage crew, and fought desperately.

The odds were fearfully against them.

A scene of intense confusion raged.

For several moments it seemed as if they would perish.

But Jack had arisen and boarded the Flyer.

He was sore, breathless and feeling very faint, but never lost his courage for an instant.

Into the store-room he dashed, and procuring a number of the grenades, he rushed to the window.

From here he hurled them at the Bedouins.

They roared like artillery whenever they burst, and the flying iron flew in all directions, wounding and killing.

Protected by their suits of mail, the actor, sailor, and the Dutchman escaped injury from the scattering missiles.

"Come this way!" screamed Jack.

His friends heard him.

They made an effort to obey.

Unable to stand the awful carnage, the Bedouins fled.

Bomb after bomb followed them, and now given the use of their rifles, Jack's companions added their shots to the destructive roaring of the grenades.

It put the Bedouins to rapid flight.

But one-third of their number were able to go, for the rest lay scattered upon the ground, maimed, dead and wounded by the awful engines of war our friends used.

In a few moments more Jack was master of the field.

"That settles it!" he cried. "We've fixed them."

"Coom back here!" yelled the pugnacious Fritz. "Coom back, you son-of-a-sea-cooks! I vant to kill der rest ohf yer!"

"Jiminey!" cried Tim, his solitary eye sparkling. "Did yer see wot I done?"

"What did you do?" grumbled Bings.

"Lordy! Lordy! You'd oughter seen me kill 'em. Thar I wuz pinned down to ther ground by two hundred o' them pilin' on top——"

"Say, now, there wasn't over fifty in the whole troupe."

"Waal, anyway, thar I wuz, unable ter move hand or foot. Wot did I do? Licked 'em arter all! How? I'll tell yer. Haulin' off wi' my right fist I struck out. Then I let my left fly. Then I crip' out from under 'em an' raisin' my rifle, I fired quick as a flash. I never stopped till twenty o' them bit ther dust. Then——"

"There are only ten shots in your rifle."

"Ay but every time I fired ther bullet flew through a man an' hit ther feller what wuz in back o' him," said Tim.

A laugh pealed from all hands, and Tim stumped away satisfied.

The Bedouins had hurriedly left the inclosure and disappeared.

Our friends then loosened the rope from the tricycle, and mounting the vehicle, they took off their metal suits and started her away.

She ran out upon the desert.

The whole band who had escaped were flying for their lives. Jack let them go.

He steered the Flyer for the southward.

The watch was divided much the same as it is on ship-board, and the tricycle continued on all night.

On the following day she reached Rijat.

The settlement was a dangerous place, as its inhabitants were mostly made up of the stranglers who infested the crimson desert.

It was imperative that our friends should stop there if they wished to glean any news of the lost consul, for it was here that his ransom was to be paid.

Consequently Jack did not hesitate to send the Flyer into the place.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STRANGLER'S PLOT.

The town of Rijat was walled around, as most Arabian settlements are, but the ramparts were low, and made of dried earth.

A large gate gave ingress to the town, and as the tricycle passed through, her appearance created a tremendous furore of excitement.

The natives raised a shout, and come flocking from all directions to watch the singular contrivance.

They wore white turbans, baggy pants, broad sashes and sandals.

The streets were very irregular, and the houses were of one or two stories, with flat, mud roofs, little windows and no external adornment.

In the center of the village stood the market place, where were ranged a few shops, for eatables, drugs and coffee.

The chief mosque stood near it, and close by the emir's (governor) house, which was not much different from the other dwellings.

A principal feature of each house was the kahwah, or coffee room, a large apartment, furnished with mats and cushions and a small furnace.

The streets were thronged with men, women and children, slim hapeens, or dromedaries, ibls, or common camels, and asses.

Upon the humps of the former animals were saddles for riding, and others for baggage, called ghageets and shedads.

These animals are driven by a blow about the neck with a crooked stick named a mihjan, and were mostly used by merchants who had paid tribute to the Bedouin chiefs for protection.

Benjamin Bings had once been in this town, and therefore knew just how to direct the young inventor.

"It's a deuced job," he said, "and we will be in no end of danger, me boy, but we can't learn much about poor Mr. Stewart unless we nail the emir in his den."

"You say we could learn of him where the consul is?"

"Sure Mike. The old hamfatter was to receive the ransom. Therefore he knows where Stewart is."

"Then I'll pull him out of his palace, or make him confess on the spot," said Jack, grimly.

"You'll have to be mighty cautious, though, for he's surrounded by a gang of heelers who are blamed handy with the bowstring."

"Whereabouts is his palace?"

"That big crib near the mosque."

From the frightened portion of the crowd arose the cry:

"Lebeyk, Allah-huma lebeyk!" ("Here we are at thy bidding, oh God!")

They waved the skirts of their ihrams over their heads, and the continued fluttering of these long shoulder and loin cloths so frightened the animals that they scattered and ran in all directions.

Jack steered the tricycle up to the door of the emir's house, and a number of swarthy guards with drawn scimitars made an effort to prevent their ingress.

But Bings yelled out the window in Arabic:

"Out of the way! We are messengers to the emir!"

"Long live the emir!" cried the guards.

Then they moved aside.

Jack drove the Flyer through the door.

He brought her to a pause in a huge audience chamber in which sat the governor and all his retinue.

It was a spacious chamber with an arched roof.

In the middle was a large fountain or basin, from which spouted a jet, while in the water swam numerous gold and silver fish.

At the end of the room stood a sort of a throne covered with silken stuff and cushions, upon which sat the emir with his legs crossed in the Oriental fashion.

His gown was of a lively green color, and had large sleeves; upon each side of his breast was a rich filletting of gold lace, and upon his head he wore a large white turban. On one side sat his sons, and on the other his brothers, while in front were the grand vizier and several councilors.

"God preserve the emir!" cried the vizier when the Flyer entered.

All who were present repeated the words noisily.

"Now for the tug of war!" said Jack. "What's to be done?"

"Alight. I'll interpret. Do as I do. Savvy?" said Bings.

They both left the vehicle, and the guards kept the crowd back from the street door.

Bings approached the dignitary.

There was a solemn silence throughout the hall.

The emir extended his hand, and Jack and the actor were permitted to kiss it as well as the hem of his robe.

It is an extraordinary favor when a Mohammedan dignitary allows a person to kiss the palm of his hand, and Bings knew it.

He was therefore favorably impressed at once.

When he and Jack had retired a few paces, the emir said in Arabic:

"Your coming has been foretold to me."

"Good!" replied Bings, in the same tongue. "It then behooves us to state that we are emissaries of the great sultan of America."

"Ah! then you have important news?"

"Yes; we have been sent to bring back the consul who has been seized by the Bedouins and held for ransom."

"In that case you have brought the money?"

"We can say nothing until you declare that our friend yet lives."

"He does."

"Positively?"

"I have seen him."

"When?"

"Within four and twenty hours."

"Is he here?"

"No; in the Crimson Desert."

"I will explain to my chief."

The emir nodded.

Bings translated what was said.

When he concluded, Jack exclaimed:

"Stewart lives, and is located less than a day's travel from here!"

"That's what his royal joblots declares," replied the actor.

"So much information gained."

"How will I brace him next?"

"Find out where Stewart is in the Crimson Desert."

"Oh, he won't give himself away as bad as that."

"Try, anyway."

"All right, me covey. Here she goes. Watch me twist his trolley."

He turned to the governor and then said:

"Are you willing to let us see the prisoner to satisfy ourselves?"

"Only under certain conditions," replied the emir.

"Name them."

"While three of you may go, bound as prisoners, the other must remain as a hostage on that strange wagon."

Bings referred the question to Jack.

The young inventor thought it over awhile.

Finally he said:

"I'll do it, but I must be the hostage."

"Suppose he is up to funny business?"

"Well, that's just what I want to guard against."

"Could you do anything for the rest of us?"

"Undoubtedly, if I am at liberty aboard the Flyer."

"Shall I tell him you consent?"

"Yes."

Bings did so.

A satisfied look crossed the emir's face.

"Call the three together!" he remarked.

"I'll send Fritz and Tim out," said Jack, when Bings explained.

He went aboard the tricycle.

Having told his chums what was said, he added:

"Are you both willing to venture?"

"Fer sure, so long dot you vos by der Flyer," said Fritz.

"If ther lubber is up ter any treachery we kin count on you, my lad, an' I'm werry well satisfied ter resk it," Tim exclaimed.

"Put on your vests of mail under your coats."

"Dot vos a goot plans," said Fritz.

They carried out the idea.

Then they left the Flyer.

Jack closed the doors and windows, and locked them.

"They won't be started far before I'll be after them!" he muttered, as he thrust a brace of pistols in his belt.

The emir called to several of his attendants to bind the hands of Tim, Fritz and Bings behind their backs.

As soon as this was done they were blindfolded.

All were aware of the risk they ran in thus submitting to the Arabs, for a more cunning, treacherous race never lived.

Moreover, they had every reason to fear that Abdallah Pasha might have preceded them there, and warned the desert rovers of the purpose they had in view.

When the three were bound, the emir said to two of his men:

"Conduct these men to the place where the prisoner is kept."

The men made a deep obeisance and led the three men out of the hall.

Scarcely had they gone when the governor called to several more of his men, and rapidly whispered an order to them.

Jack had his eyes upon the men.

There were a dozen of them.

He saw the Bedouins hastily thrust a number of articles under the cloaks of camel's hair, and hasten out after the prisoners.

A thrill of horror convulsed Jack, for he had seen that they were bows of wood, with loose thongs.

These weapons were used by the Arabian stranglers to kill people whom they desired to put out of the way.

It was very evident that the emir contemplated treachery.

He, no doubt, intended that the stranglers should follow the three helpless prisoners and murder them.

Just as Jack came to this conclusion a startling event occurred, that confirmed his belief in the theory.

The heavy damask curtains hanging in back of the emir parted, and a man's face was seen in the opening.

One glance sufficed to show Jack who he was.

"Abdallah Pasha!" he gasped.

Now he understood how they had been victimized.

The Arab had preceded them there and put the emir upon his guard, when this cunning trick was devised to kill the four rescuers.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

The face between the curtains only remained in view a few moments.

It was then withdrawn as suddenly as it appeared.

"By thunder, we have fallen into a trap!" muttered Jack, as the truth of the matter dawned upon his mind. "Now how are we to get out of it?"

He glanced around.

A large number of guards had come in.

They were crowding suspiciously close around the Flyer, and all had their flashing black eyes fastened upon the emir.

These men wore beards and had their skulls shaven.

They carried lances, scimeters and daggers and had lapsed into an oppressive silence that had a deep significance.

Jack soon had a plan of action formed in his mind.

He turned to a switchboard and cut out half the batteries which were used for lighting, fan dynamos and other similar purposes.

Coupling these currents with the ram and the side wheels, he pulled a lever and grounded the current into the tricycle.

From the end of the ram, and at the rims of the wheels there suddenly flew off great streaks of blazing light.

They emitted a snapping and crackling sound.

Great lightning-like flashes zig-zagged outward, accompanied by meteoric balls of blue and crimson fire, thousands of bright sparks and tongues of flying flame.

A fearful chorus of yells escaped the Bedouins when this artificial lightning suddenly burst upon them.

They rushed away from the tricycle.

Everyone whose flesh was met by the flaming electricity was burnt as if by red hot coals.

The clothing of some caught fire.

Shrieks of pain and alarm resounded on all sides.

The emir bounded to his feet, filled with horror, and made a frantic rush to follow the crowd.

Before he had taken two steps, Jack confronted him.

The young inventor had a small powerful electric battery in his pocket, and each pole of it in his hands.

"Hold on there, old fellow!" he exclaimed.

The next moment he had the emir by the neck.

Jack was electrified.

As soon as he touched the chief the current shot into him, and wrung a prolonged howl of agony from the Arab.

He felt as if millions of needles in rows were pulsating through his body, from the ends of his toes to the crown of his head.

Down he went upon his knees, screaming with fright and trembling with fear, his dusky face convulsed and every nerve twitching from the current.

"Come along with me!" exclaimed Jack.

The young inventor was very powerful.

He hoisted his victim upon his shaking feet, and ran him to the tricycle as fast as his legs would carry him.

Along they rushed to the rear door.

It stood wide open.

Jack hauled the man in.

Bang went the door shut.

In a moment more he had a pair of handcuffs on the emir's wrists, and another pair linking his ankles together.

He then flung the treacherous old rascal upon the floor, stopped the battery, and hastened into the turret.

Here he pulled the motor lever.

The machine was turned around and headed for the door.

By this time most of the people had rushed from the room, and a crowd blocked up the doorway.

As the ram swept toward them, throwing off its fiery darts, the chorus of yells was augmented and they recoiled.

Not being able to go swiftly, they fell.

The ground was strewn with their struggling bodies, and the machine rolled over them, the blazing streaks flying from the wheels striking the prostrate men.

A wild rush was made by the people in the street to get out of the way of the appalling machine.

Into the street rushed the Flyer, looking like some horrible monster with its fiery tongues and flashing globules.

Everyone was terrified.

None dared to stand and face it.

Along she whirled for the gate.

It was closed.

Jack stopped the Flyer and the sentries fled.

Seizing a number of bombs, he hurled them out the open window at the portals that barred his exit from the town.

Boom! Boom! Boom! they roared.

The gate was shattered.

Down went its fragments with a crash.

Ahead shot the Flyer out upon the sandy plain.

Casting a quick glance around, Jack failed to see his friends.

He did not pause to speculate, but putting every volt obtainable into the wheels, he drove the tricycle ahead.

She made a circuit of the walls encompassing the town.

On the east side was another closed gate.

For a moment Jack feared that his companions had been murdered within the city walls.

Now, however, he saw a number of figures moving away in the distance across the desert.

Levelling a glass at them, he discerned several camels and men, among whom he recognized the Dutchman, sailor and actor.

It was evident by the number of men in the party that the stranglers had joined their companions.

Shutting the window, Jack started the Flyer after them, leaving the city and its excited population behind.

Away dashed the tricycle like a whirlwind.

"I'll catch up with them in a few moments!" muttered Jack.

"Hey!" growled a voice behind him.

The tones were so sudden and unexpected that Jack was startled.

He jumped, and looking around, saw that it was the parrot.

No sooner had Bismarck made his remark, when Whiskers came through from the other room and saw the bird.

An ear-splitting howl escaped the monkey, and he made a swift bound for the bird.

The next instant they met with a bang.

Over went the parrot on his back, uttering a wild scream.

Whiskers gave the bird a punch, but before he could withdraw his paw Bismarck fastened his beak in the monkey's finger.

Then a tussle began between them.

They flew around and around, and an uproar ensued.

Jack went for them.

Both were afraid of him.

Whiskers rushed away, dragging the parrot after him, as Bismarck would not relax his tenacious grip, and they both vanished in the rear compartment, where the fight was resumed.

On went the tricycle rapidly.

In the course of a few moments she was near enough to the people ahead for Jack to distinguish them with his naked eyes.

He saw that they had paused.

All had alighted from the camels, and had divided into three parties, all of whom surrounded the prisoners.

Jack now saw that his friends were vainly struggling with the Arabs.

They had put the bowstrings over the prisoners' throats, and twisting the wooden part at the back of their necks, the cords cut into the throats of the three.

They then began to strangle to death.

Having their arms bound, they were unable to defend themselves, and were almost entirely at the mercy of the garroters.

Deep into their skin sunk the deadly cords, as the dark rascals held them on all sides to endure their punishment.

They were black in the faces.

Their eyeballs grew bloodshot, and bulged from their sockets.

Out from their purple lips protruded their swollen tongues, and it became impossible for them to breathe.

Their sight failed them and they reeled.

Death was staring them in the face then.

But the Flyer was rushing to the rescue like a thing of life.

Over the desert the Flyer sped. The Bedouins saw her, and, startled by the sight, released their victims, who fell to the ground, relieved of the pressure upon their throats.

Bang! Bang! Bang! rattled a volley from Jack's pistols.

That left no doubt in the minds of the stranglers as to what the young inventor's intention was, for several of them fell.

Away they rushed with cries of fright.

The camels became infected with the general panic, and uttering their strange, unearthly cries, went lumbering away with their awkward motion in a direction contrary to that of the men.

Up to the fallen three dashed the tricycle.

There she paused, and Jack alighted.

He found his friends alive, much to his joy.

Indeed, Fritz was conscious, and Tim partially so, although the actor was totally insensible, as he had received the worst choking.

In a few moments all three had recovered.

Jack took off the blindfolds and cut their bonds.

For a few moments they were furious at their tricky foes, and when Jack told them that he had seen Abdallah in the palace, they realized why they had thus been dealt with.

It was a source of grim satisfaction to them to hear that they had the emir at their mercy, and they started to board the Flyer, when it suddenly started off.

Amazed, they glanced up at the turret.

The emir stood there with his manacled hands pushing one of the levers, which started the Flyer going.

Away she rushed before any of our friends could get aboard, and although they ran after her, they could not go as fast as the machine, and were quickly left far behind.

"Great heavens! We've lost her!" groaned Jack, in dismay.
 "Vot vill become ohf us now?" bluntly asked Fritz.
 The others were too distressed to reply.

CHAPTER IX.

ATTACKED BY A PANTHER.

Lost on the desert!

Such was the condition of our friends.

The Roba el Khaliyeh, or "Empty Space," was called by modern Arabs the Dahna, or "Crimson," on account of the color of its heated sands.

It extends from Yemen and Hadramant on the southwest, south, and southeast to Oman on the east.

But it is separated from the northern half of the waste ring that girdles Nejd by the continuation of the Wady Dowasir and Shahran up to the mountains of Tayef, near Mecca.

Lying, as it does, within the tropics, the heat of the desert was fearful by day, and owing to the general low level it was scarcely mitigated by night.

Twilight had fallen upon our friends.

A dull reddish glow filled the sky, lending a yellow tinge to the sands, and the sun below the horizon sent up great shafts into the hazy, cloudless blue of the heavens.

Shipwrecked sailors on the sea could not have been more completely lost than were Jack and his friends in the desert.

A hot wind had sprung up while they were following the trail of the tricycle, and blowing the sand about, it settled in the tracks of the wheels and covered them up.

Soon they had nothing to guide them.

Miles from any human habitation, nothing in sight but endless wastes of sand and sky, a feeling of despair took possession of them.

The prospect was very gloomy.

"I don't see how the emir gained control of the tricycle," said Jack, finally. "He seemed to know just how to work her."

"Dit yer hav der doors oben vot leads from der turret into der oder rooms alretty?" queried Fritz.

"Yes—I am sure of it, for when Whiskers and Bismarck were fighting in the turret I recollect yelling at them to stop and they went back into the sleeping room."

"Den vwhile dose doors vos oben, dot chief must abeen vatch-in' how yer work der Flyer's lefer."

"Sure enough. That must have been the way it was."

"But the course he tacked off on is lost now," growled Tim, "an' I don't see wot way we are to steer ter overhaul hlm."

"Nor can I, unless we keep on to the southeast."

"Southeast?"

"That's the direction the Flyer followed."

"How d'yer know, my lad?"

"By the situation of the sun when it went down."

"Ay, now, that's so. Wot a observin' eye you have got."

"There's a beacon for us now. See the moon rising?"

"So it be."

"By keeping in a direction between where the moon rose and the sun went down, we can come pretty near a direct course. But, of course, we must make due allowance for its ascent."

"Heave ahead, my hearty."

"Ah, say now," said Benjamin Bings, in disgust, "what's the use of going on a wild goose chase? We can never reach that runaway tricycle. We might chase ourselves for a week and not find her. You don't know how big this blooming desert is."

"Might just as well follow the course of the tricycle as to go in any other direction," said Jack.

"Well, now, I guess you're about right after all. There's

nothing bogus about your ideas, old man. Tim, give me a chew of plug."

"Ain't got no 'baccy 'cept wot's stowed in my jaw."

"Bless your alpaca heart, that's a misfortune. Now, on the level, haven't you got a bull dog in your pocket?"

"A bull dog?" asked Tim, with a puzzled look.

"Yea, verily, me noble duke, a bull dog. In other words, a pocket pistol—in the vernacular, a flask of liquor."

"Don't mention it," groaned Tim. "I only wisht I had."

"No whisky! Misfortunes never come alone. Tim, you're N. G. I had a higher opinion of you. Alas, my hopes are gone. No rum or tobacco! How are you fixed for a pistol?"

"What d'yer want it fer?"

"Blow myself to glory. Confound it. I'm getting tired. This is worse than getting stranded forty miles from Gotham and walking the tracks to get home from a bum engagement."

"Lordy!" said Tim, "d'yer call this bad?"

"Bad? Bad? It's rotten."

"I don't. It ain't nuthin' ter me."

"Great heavens, man, are you off your nut?"

"Waal, I don't reckon. But yer'd oughter been in ther navy wi' me if yer wanted ter see hard times. Why, once I wuz shipwrecked in ther Atlantic an' didn't hev nuthin' but a oar ter hold me up."

"That must have been pretty rocky."

"Don't say a word," said Tim, grimly. "Thar I wuz floatin' in ther midst of a storm, thousan's o' miles from land, an' not a soul near me. A big wave came along an' washed that ere plank——"

"Oar!"

"I mean oar."

"Why don't you say so, then?"

"Let it pass. As I wuz a-sayin', thar I wuz left with nuthin' ter hold me up. Wot did I do? Why, I onscrewed my wooden leg an' held onter that. Waal, sir, I floated along fer a week. My leg got water logged at last an' sunk."

"Left you on your uppers again, hey?"

"Ay, ay. Waal, arter breakfast one mornin'——"

"Where did you get it?" asked Bings, in surprise.

"Why," stammered Tim. "I caught a porgy an' chawed it raw."

"Oh, I see. I suppose you scooped the dew off the top of the ocean to quench your thirst, didn't you?"

"No," replied Tim. "Whenever it rained, I throwed my head back, opened my mouth an' let the drops fall in till my belly wuz full. As I wuz about to remark, one mornin' I sighted a sail, an' sent up a signal o' distress to ther mast head."

"Hey?"

"I mean I yelled for help."

"Oh, go on."

"You don't understand sea terms, I reckon."

"No; I've never been off of land," grinned Bings.

"Wot! Didn't yer hev ter cross the ocean ter git here?"

"Of course; but I had mv³ on the soles of my shoes all the way over."

"Belay that foolin'. Whar did I leave off?"

"Jigger me if I know."

"Oh, yes. I signaled a passin' ship."

"Well, well! And I suppose she picked you up and you were saved?"

"No, sir, yer wrong. Her crew didn't hear me. She wuz goin' along at twelve knots an hour. I knowed that onless I caught her I'd get waterlogged like my wooden leg did, an' sink down inter Davy Jones' locker. Now wot d'yer s'pose I dld ter catch that ere schooner?"

"Swam after it."

"Wot man kin swim as fast as a ship can sail?"

"You ought to, for you can lie as fast as a horse can trot."

"Awast thar! Don't yer rile me, Bings, or I may hurt yer."

Let's see. Whar did I leave off? Oh, yes. I wuz a-goin' to tell yer how I overtook that ere craft. I seen a umbrelly floatin' in ther water, an' openin' it I waited for a gale o' wind wot wuz flyin' toward me. As soon as ther wind caught ther umbrelly, I flew across ther top o' ther water toward ther ship like a skyrocket, and landed again her planks with sich a bunk my hat jammed down over my ears. Waal, sir, it didn't take me a minute ter git aboard o' that vessel, an'——"

"Come off. Say, do you take me for a hayseed?"

"Don't yer believe me?"

"No, I don't."

"Waal, all's I kin say is that yer needn't then."

And Tim lapsed into silence.

The four had been plodding steadily ahead.

At this juncture Jack suddenly cried, as he pointed ahead:

"See there! What is that—a settlement?"

"Looks like it, me boy," said Bings. "But it's in ruins."

The housetowers and columns rose above the dead level of the desert, about two miles ahead, and they walked toward it.

A few date palms, some bushes and some rocks surrounded it.

By this time the moon and stars were gleaming like electric lights from the azure firmament, and shed their mellow rays down upon the lonely ruins.

In a short time our friends reached the place.

They saw at a glance that it was the remains of a small village half buried in the shifting sands.

It was desolate and forbidding in appearance, standing lone and forsaken in the midst of that dreary waste.

They paused here to rest themselves, for the sand was hot and the air so stifling that they perspired and felt parched.

Jack left his companions.

He wanted to examine the ruin.

They were all very thirsty, and he argued that as there was a settlement here, the inhabitants must have had water from either a stream, or else by sinking a well.

Bad as the water was, it would now be a great boon to them, for the sand choked their throats, and the intense heat augmented the dreadful thirst that assailed them.

The young inventor pushed along among the half ruined houses, scrambled over heaps of stones, and soon reached the opposite side of the settlement.

Here he caught sight of a spring.

It bubbled from some rocks, ran a short distance through a tiny hedge of camel-grass, and sunk in the sand again.

Jack rushed eagerly toward it.

But he was suddenly brought to a pause by hearing a horrible shriek, and the bushes parted ahead of him.

In the opening there appeared the head and shoulders of an enormous fahd, or panther.

In a moment it fastened its glaring glance upon Jack, and then gathered itself together for a mighty spring. It reached the young inventor, and with a terrible shock knocked him down.

sharp claws began to ribbon the young inventor's clothing and lacerate his flesh.

Over and over he rolled with the beast, managing by sheer force of muscle to keep its ugly jaws away, so that it could not injure him with its fangs.

Of a sudden he got it beneath him.

Tearing his knife from his belt, he plunged it into the body of the monster, inflicting a terrible wound.

It was as if the brute received an electric shock when the keen blade pierced its body.

There was a sudden contraction and expansion of its muscles and Jack suddenly found himself hurled away.

Bounding to his feet, he glared around.

His rifle was close to the panther.

He could not reach it now.

The beast got upon its legs and crouched down.

No such thought as that of escaping entered its mind.

Jack clutched the knife tightly and sized up his antagonist.

The panther presented a repulsive spectacle as it crouched there, covered with blood, its eyes glaring like balls of fire, and its tail lashing its flanks.

It was very much infuriated.

All the venom in its disposition was aroused.

It meant to tear Jack to pieces to avenge its injuries.

The young inventor saw this plainly enough, and realized that they were bound to have a duel to the death.

One or the other must perish—that was certain.

The panther sprang for him again, and he swiftly bounded aside, making it miss its mark and land on the ground.

Here it swung around and rushed at him.

Jack received it on the point of his knife.

Another ghastly wound was inflicted.

It raised its paw and struck the knife a blow, knocking it from Jack's hand, and then recoiled, rubbing its gashed face and whining and snarling with pain and rage.

Jack made a dash for his rifle.

The monster heard him running and went after him.

He reached the weapon, grasped it, and turned just in time to avoid having the panther leap on his back.

Without raising the weapon he fired.

The shot struck the beast between the eyes.

It sank into its skull and exploded with a dull report.

A cracking sound came from the beast's skull.

Its head was blown to fragments.

Down it dropped upon the ground.

"Dead!" exclaimed Jack, giving a great sigh of relief.

He stood looking at its decapitated body when his friends came rushing to the spot.

They were alarmed by the shot.

"Gee whiz! Wot's amiss?" roared Tim.

"I shot a panther," coolly replied the young inventor.

"Lodks as if the mug shot you," said Bings, eyeing Jack's torn clothes.

"Donner vetter! vot a fight yer must ahah," enviously said Fritz.

"Quite a tussle."

"Are ye injured, lad?"

"Only scratched a little, Tim."

"I've lived in actors' boarding-houses," said Bings, "but jigger me, if I ever had to scratch my hide as hard as that!"

Everyone laughed and Jack showed them the water.

The panther must have been at it to quench its thirst when it saw Jack and pitched into him.

They found the water to be wholesome enough, and eagerly drank.

Scarcely had they done so, when Tim exclaimed:

"Why, this place must be alive with animals!"

"Do you see any more panthers?"

"No; but thar's a monkey sittin' on that column."

CHAPTER X.

THE CAPSIZE.

Jack felt the claws of the beast strike through his clothing, and it came down on top of him with force enough to almost knock the breath out of his body.

His rifle flew out of his hands upon the sand, and the next moment he buried his fingers in the long fur encircling the neck of the beast and tried to push it away.

It made its leg fly as if it were running, and its strong,

"He's a red one."

"Wot of it?"

"The only monkeys native here are small, black-faced, and long-tailed."

"Queer! Wot d'yer make o' this one?"

"Don't you see it's Whiskers?"

"Wot?" roared Tim.

"Here, Whiskers! Whiskers! Whiskers!" called Jack.

The monkey gave a howl and came hopping toward them in the greatest delight, and all saw that Jack made no error.

They were puzzled to account for his presence there, and came to the conclusion that he must have escaped from the tricycle when it was passing the ruin.

"But suppose the Flyer is here!" said Jack.

His suggestion startled the rest.

They glanced significantly at each other.

Then Jack made a bee line for the place Whiskers came from.

His companions followed him, and going around some of the houses they were startled by hearing a rasping and buzzing sound behind the broken wall of the village.

Close by there was a gate.

Jack passed through.

"Hello, Central, connect me with a brewery!" yelled a sharp voice.

"Bismarck!" cried Jack, seeing who spoke.

The parrot stood on top of the electric tricycle, and the machine laid over on its side from having capsized.

It had run up against the ancient wall, and was thrown over by the front wheel having mounted a steep pile of fallen rocks.

A yell of delight escaped our friends.

This unexpected good fortune overjoyed them.

"Here she is!" cried Jack, delightedly. "Here she is!"

They all made a wild rush for her, and saw that the buzzing noise came from the flying wheels.

The rear door was open and Jack entered the turret.

Upon the side laid the emir senseless, with a cut on his head.

Everything was turned topsy-turvy.

Jack stopped the machinery and dragged the prisoner out.

He then procured some ropes, and directing his friends what to do, they finally got the machine upon her wheels again.

She was not injured by the capsize, but many loose articles inside were broken or thrown from their places.

An effort was made to revive the Arab.

It proved successful after awhile.

He was terrified to find himself captured.

"Ask him where we are to look for Mr. Stewart," said Jack to the actor, "and if he tells the truth we will spare his life."

Bings nodded.

"See here," said he to the governor. "Your life hangs by a thread; any treachery on your part will cause us to sever it."

"Spare me!" groaned the emir. "Spare me!"

"That depends. Where is your white prisoner?"

"In the heart of the desert."

"Will you guide us there if we spare you?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Good! It is a bargain. Now how did this happen?"

"I did not know how to steer the vehicle, although I saw how it was started and therefore could not avoid the rocks."

"Get up inside."

"I cannot walk, as I am shackled."

"Then I will lift you," said Bings.

And he flung the rascal into the store-room.

He knew that his treachery was exposed, and expected little mercy from our friends for having tried to have them strangled.

Jack and his companions attended to their injuries.

They then changed their clothing, and as Fritz attended to the cooking, he soon had a good supper prepared.

So exhausted were they by their long, weary tramp after the Flyer that they all turned in and slept until the next day.

There was no relief from the broiling heat.

It made them suffer frightfully; indeed, had their heads not been shaded by the roof above, they could scarcely have endured the oppressive climate.

The sun seemed to be reflected against them by the hot sand.

Some relief was gained from the draughts created by the fanwheels, and they wore goggles to keep the burning, crimson sand from out their eyes.

In the afternoon the Flyer was started in a direction indicated by the Arab, and her fat pneumatic tires went over the desert as softly as if it were a velvet carpet.

They were well adapted to such yielding ground.

The afternoon passed and night began to fall, when a train of camels was seen in the distance.

But little travel is done by day over the Arabian deserts, in consequence of the intense heat, the natives resting quietly and sleeping while the sun shines, and take up their line of march in the more tolerable moonlight.

As Jack glanced at the caravan, he saw the men go running about wildly, while the camels hastily went down upon their knees and laid upon the ground.

The cause of their excitement soon became apparent.

In the distance a furious sand storm was rushing toward them with all its devastating horrors.

Once it passed the caravan it seemed likely to engulf the tricycle and bury it or tear it to pieces.

As soon as Jack caught sight of the threatening danger, he shouted the news to his companions.

"We cannot remain here and submit to the storm!" he cried. "I am going to race it to get out of its way."

CHAPTER XI.

STRUGGLING WITH THE STORM.

The storm of the desert threatening the tricycle was called the sambuli.

Along the horizon a thin, yellowish vapor appeared which quickly grew denser and then rapidly overspread the whole sky.

Gusts of hot, poisonous winds followed fiercely.

They were accompanied by great clouds of the crimson sand, heated to burning by the hot sun during the day.

These vast clouds formed into enormous columns, reaching from the earth up into the yellow haze above like water spouts.

Impelled by the wind, they whirled forward in an up-splashing tempest of dusty clouds, obscuring everything from view.

The terrible energy of these gusts transported enormous mounds of the desert from place to place leagues apart.

Jack glanced at the thermometer.

The mercury had risen to 105 degrees.

It was suffocating.

Every gust of hot air was strangling.

Beads of sweat stood out upon their faces, and the flying particles lodged in their nostrils and throats, making it hard to breathe.

Glancing back, Jack saw the storm engulf the caravan.

He knew that neither the men nor animals had much chance for life then, and to save himself from destruction, he started the tricycle off at full speed before the storm.

Enormous columns of sand pursued.

They rushed along some distance and then burst.

Down showered tons of the grit in thick, blinding clouds, each fall causing a thunderous rumble and a shock to the earth.

Stunted acacias and tamarisks flew through the air, and the yellow haze deepened into a fiery crimson glow.

Soon the adventurers were gasping for breath.

Jack grasped the wheel firmly and headed southwest, for he saw that the sambuli was going southwest.

The Flyer skimmed over the sand like a locomotive.

Outside the ground was covered with thousands of perbooa, or kangaroo rats, that burro in the sand.

They were pretty little beasts, with long, hind legs and short forepaws, that leaped by the help of their long sinewy tails like kangaroos.

Their white and fawn-colored bodies were flying from the storm almost as fast as the Flyer was then going.

Millions of locusts blackened the air in an effort to run away from the hot blasts of wind, and ahead of the tricycle rushed a file of twenty or thirty ostriches at an amazing pace.

Ordinarily a swift horse cannot overtake them, but now they almost kept pace with the tricycle, as fear lent speed to their legs.

Among the swarm of locusts flew hoopoe birds, bustards, katas, sparrow-hawks and vultures.

It was a mad race for life.

All creation in the great desert was flying for safety.

"Gainin'?" anxiously asked Tim.

"The storm is nearing us," Jack replied.

"Can't ye crack on more sail?"

"We are doing our best now."

"Blow me, if I think we'll escape."

"See—we've reached the ostriches."

Bang! came the foot of one of the birds against the machine.

It was a terrific kick and threw her head about a trifle.

The ram struck the bird the next moment and impaled it.

This was unlucky.

The body remained on the ram.

It therefore impeded the Flyer's progress.

"Tim, can you mind the wheel?"

"Ah, say. What yer goin' ter do?"

"Climb out there and get rid of the ostrich."

"Go ahead, my hearty."

Leaving the wheel in the old sailor's hands, Jack climbed out of the window and got astride of the ram.

By this time the Flyer was passing the birds one by one.

The one that was impaled was dead, and it was a hard task to remove it from the ram.

Jack pushed, shoved and strained at it with all his might and finally managed to loosen it.

Giving an extra hard shove at it, he felt it suddenly give away, and so great was the pressure he brought to bear that he suddenly went headlong to the ground with it.

He struck the ground on his stomach beside the ostrich.

The next moment the front wheel of the tricycle passed over his body, giving him a sudden and fearful squeeze.

The driving wheels were so widely separated that they missed him, and the tricycle ran on, leaving him behind it.

He laid helpless for a few moments.

Then he felt the kangaroo rats swarming over him, and jumping to his feet, he saw the Flyer coming to a pause.

After it he ran as fast as he could go, and springing on the hind step, he yelled to Tim:

"Go ahead."

"Ay, ay," was the reply.

And on the wheel rushed again.

Not more than a minute was lost.

Slight as was the delay, however, it brought the raging tempest closer to the flying tricycle.

Great clouds of the crimson sand flew over her, rattling like hail, and obscured the land ahead.

They now could hear the moaning, roaring and whistling of the wind as it tore along in spasmodic puffs.

Jack went inside.

Here he found Fritz oiling the bearings.

"Shiminey Christmas! Where you coom from?" he gasped.

"Fell overboard," replied Jack, hastening up forward.

The monkey and parrot were crouching under the furniture, very much frightened, and chattering furiously.

It had become so dark now that Tim had turned on the electric lights, and the rays of the searchlight cut through the sandy haze ahead like a dagger.

As soon as Jack reached the turret Bings pump-handled him.

"Well, well, well!" said he. "May I be jiggered if you didn't escape! I tell you, when we reach civilization I'm going to double up with you in a sketch, old man, lithograph the towns with Bings and Wright, and we'll do 'em the niftiest song and dance ever given on the boards. Regular high-class ostrich jugglers, so help me."

"How is she going, Tim?"

"Sixty knots an hour."

"Put out the lights."

"Ay—ay!"

"Now switch on the light batteries."

"In addition ter ther ones wot I'm usin'?"

"Yes; that will give us ten miles better."

"It's done."

Gloom, deep and forbidding, settled down.

But the tricycle now sped along much faster.

Every creature they encountered was passed and left behind.

Along they tore, and the showers of sand that had been sweeping over the Flyer began to diminish rapidly.

Mile after mile was passed.

Jack glanced back and smiled triumphantly.

"Hurrah!" he shouted. "We are gaining on the storm."

"I knowed we'd do it," chuckled Tim.

"Hark!" interposed Bings just then.

An ominous cracking was heard underneath the Flyer, and then without the slightest warning, the axle snapped in two.

Down she went in a heap.

Jack grasped the lever and shut off the current.

"Oh, me, oh, my!" roared Bings.

The tricycle paused.

Everyone but Jack was thrown down.

"Doomed!" cried Tim, utterly aghast.

"Don't get excited, boys!" calmly cried Jack.

Fritz came rushing in with hair on end and eyes bulging.

"Sacrament!" roared he; "vot's busted?"

"The axle," said Jack.

"I thought id would."

"Why?"

"Der electricity melded id."

"How do you know?"

"I seen id leakin' from a vire into der axle."

"Didn't you try to stop it?"

"Yah. Ohf course I did."

"But failed."

"I tink so."

"Keep cool now, boys. Come into the dining room."

They left the turret.

Jack gave this injunction because the sambuli was near.

The wind howled and shrieked, and clods of sand fell on the Flyer.

It was heaped up against her in a bank.

Every time a driving gust of wind came along, it shook and rattled the tricycle as if it would rack her to pieces.

A deep silence ensued among her occupants.

They crouched upon the floor in suspenseful anxiety.

The awful cataclysm menacing them filled each one with dread.

Every moment the wind grew wilder and more boisterous.

From the sky, and sweeping off the surface of the desert, came tons of the fiery sand upon the tricycle.

In a few moments more the sambuli reached her.

The crash and din were frightful.

An enormous cloud of the dust, gyrating and roaring, shrieking and screaming in the terrible wind, flew around her.

She was buried.

Her inmates were buried in her.

Outside it seemed as if all the raging powers of the infernal regions were let loose to play their demoniacal revels. Gloom so dense that nothing could be seen settled down.

Our friends, gasping, shuddering, smothering, and wild, closed their eyes, for it seemed that the Day of Judgment had come.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STRANGLERS AT WORK.

In all his previous experience Jack had never found himself in a situation as serious as that which now threatened him.

Death from smothering seemed to be the fate destined for the inmates of the buried tricycle.

Nothing could be seen of the rest in the gloom.

But Jack realized that they were in utter despair, and were not capable of doing anything for themselves in their present state of mind.

It therefore devolved upon the young inventor to act.

Only by prompt measures could he hope to save their lives.

Saying nothing to them, he flung open the rear door.

A stream of sand gushed in on him.

He let it pour a few moments.

Then he saw a faint gleam of red light above.

It filled him with hope, for it was thus made evident that there was a means of reaching the outer air.

Satisfied of this, he procured several bombs, a length of wire, and his small pocket battery.

Then he began to dig his way out.

He soon reached the top of the sand and gazed around.

The worst of the storm was past.

Great clouds of sand were sweeping along over the desert with the roasting winds.

The heat outside had increased rather than diminished, and Jack at once saw that the tricycle was buried under a large mound of the desert dust.

He fastened the wire to the bombs and buried them in the hill.

Then he touched the other end of the wire to the battery.

A smothered explosion ensued as the bombs burst, and a large mass of the sand was blown up into the air.

The wind caught it and carried it away.

Its removal exposed part of the tricycle.

In a minute more Jack was inside the Flyer, shouting to his half fainting companions to arouse themselves.

He then almost dragged them out into the air.

Bad as it was here it was much better than it had been within the injured machine, and they quickly revived.

"Again we owe our lives to you!" gasped Bings.

"Did you want to lie down and die without a struggle?"

"Lieber Gott! How dot machine was puried!" cried Fritz.

"Jack, we're a set o' big fools. You've got more grit in yer little finger than we has in our whole bodies!" Tim exclaimed.

"Come. Look alive! We have no time for praises."

"Vot ve do?"

"Get the Flyer out."

"By a-blastin'?"

"That's the only way."

They set to work and soon were exploding more shells.

A mass of dust flew up every time the bombs burst, and in a short time all the body of the machine was uncovered.

Then they dragged her free entirely.

She was full of sand, but that was quickly got rid of.

Jack then examined the broken axle.

It could be jointed, he saw, with some work.

Fortunately, it was a habit of his to carry tools and materials for repairs on every trip he made, and he now had a supply.

If he had been without them his journey would have ended right where he was, as the tricycle would have been a hopeless wreck.

They turned the Flyer over on her side.

All hands then set to work.

They labored incessantly all night.

With the break of day their toil was finished.

And when they turned the Flyer upon her wheels again she was as strong as ever, and perfectly capable of continuing her journey.

"It was the electric wire heating the axle that caused it to break," said Jack. "It came pretty near being the death of us."

"You don'd vos gone on yet, alretty?" asked Fritz.

"No. We are all pretty well used up. We will rest till to-night."

"Jist looker wot ther storm did!" said Tim, pointing out.

The sun was rising in the east like a ball of fire.

Its rays darted down upon a terrible scene of devastation.

Great mounds, ridges and dunes of sand were formed in places, there were mighty hollows scooped out and the level wastes presented the serrated appearance of the seashore.

Here and there the bodies of camels and men were to be seen, vast tracts were covered by the debris carried along by the gale from miles away, and trees and shrubs were torn up by the roots and scattered broadcast.

The giant hand that smote across the crimson desert had carried everything before it with irresistible impetuosity.

Having viewed the scene, our friends glanced at their prisoner whom they found mumbling prayers to Allah as fast as his lying tongue could rattle.

They told him they were safe, and turned in, for the storm had vanished and another scorching day began.

Everyone slept until the fall of dusk.

Fritz then prepared their supper.

The heat had slightly subsided by this time, and feeling much refreshed, they started the tricycle off again.

"I've questioned the emir again," said Bings to the young inventor, as they stood in the turret speeding along.

"Well, what did he have to say?"

"We will find our man in the village of El Janz——"

"So he once said. But the location—the location."

"It lies one hundred miles from Letan to the eastward."

"How are we to find Letan?"

"It is northeast of Rijat, and lies on the caravan route which extends between Terim, in the south at Hadramant, and Huthah up in Yemen, at the north of the desert."

"Well?"

"The town of El Janz lies in a valley between the Hadramant

hills, and is fortified by hundreds of Wahhabees, who are only happy when they are killing somebody."

"Rather a tough prospect," said Jack.

"Well, I should stammer."

"Still we've got the upper hand."

"How do you mean?"

"Having the emir as a hostage."

"True. But how can you use his nobs?"

"Swap him for Mr. Stewart."

"That's the caper. Bully for you!"

Jack smiled, for Bings' quaint language amused him.

He had this purpose in view when he abducted the emir.

Under the actor's direction he steered the Flyer for Letan.

She went along slowly, and at daybreak reached the settlement.

The gates were shut.

So they had to wait until sunrise.

Some native travelers were waiting there too with their camels.

They had arrived at nightfall, and were obliged to wait for day to get into the quaint walled village.

The arrival of the tricycle created a furore of excitement among them, and they crowded around her curiously.

While they were so engaged some of the black camel drivers began to yell, and Jack glanced toward them.

A band of marauding Wahhabees had, disguised as honest merchants, pitched their tents among those of the travelers.

As soon as the appearance of the Flyer attracted the merchants from their goods, the robbers pounced upon the merchandise.

Seeing the camel drivers raising a disturbance, the rascals knocked them down, fell upon the poor wretches, and with their customary ferocity tried to strangle them to death.

"The stranglers! The stranglers!" shrieked the unfortunate negroes, and these cries alarmed their masters.

"Did you hear that?" gasped Bings, with a start of alarm.

"I can't understand their lingo!"

"They yelled 'The Stranglers!' me boy."

"Sure enough! They're chokin' the poor fellows to death."

"May I be jiggered for a ham if you ain't right."

The unfortunate Arabs rushed toward their property to save it from the ruthless thieves.

But they were confronted by the spears, knives and scimitars of the stranglers, who hissed at them, cursed them, insulted them, and dared them to approach any nearer.

Intimidated, the Arabs paused.

They were cast into a desperate frame of mind.

With the loss of these goods they would be ruined.

Moreover, as they knew that the population of the town was largely composed of these Wahhabees, they realized that an appeal to the sheik would be of no avail.

He would be afraid to assist them.

It was heartrending to see their grief.

"Arm yourselves, and to your posts, boys!"

Thus cried Jack, as he seized a brace of pistols from a rack, and started the tricycle going.

Away rushed his companions.

They saw what was wanted of them.

In a few moments they were armed to the teeth, and had manned the loop-holes in the back rooms.

Before the charge of the tricycle the merchants scattered.

Jack saw that the robbers had the camel drivers down on the ground, and were choking the life out of them.

Away dashed the Flyer toward them.

"Give them a volley!" shouted Jack.

Several reports were heard.

The flying bullets let the stranglers know pretty plainly what the intentions of our friends were.

All the dusky rascals were armed.

They released their victims, and springing behind the camels they opened fire upon the tricycle.

In a moment more the Flyer was among them.

CHAPTER XIII.

MYSTERIOUS CRIES.

In the midst of the firing the gates were flung open, and a large number of men rushed from the village.

They sided with the thieves, as they belonged to the same tribe.

"Just as I feared!" muttered Jack.

Many of the newcomers were armed with muskets, and seeing that all the fighting came from the tricycle they opened fire on her.

Thick and fast flew the bullets on both sides.

With a savage impetuosity the Wahhabees crowded up around the Flyer, and seeing that no shots came from the rear, a number of them got around to the back and fastened a camel tether to the steps.

A crowd of them seized upon the end of it.

Despite the wheels pulling the tricycle in the opposite direction, the Arabs dragged her through the gates and closed them.

As there were no loopholes in the rear, our friends could not get aim at them, and had to submit to capture.

Along the principal street rushed the crowd, dragging the Flyer after them until they reached the public square.

"By thunder, we are at their mercy!" cried Jack.

"Wot are ther lubbers a-goin' ter do wi' us?" Tim demanded.

"Avenge the shots we soaked 'em, you may be sure," said Bings.

"Dey didn't could got us oud ohf here alretty!" Fritz declared.

Could he have seen where they were being dragged, he would have altered his opinion.

The natives kept on till they reached a large basin used as a public bath, from which a spring welled up.

Leaving the Flyer standing upon the embankment, they ran around to the other side with the rope.

Here they began to pull again.

Down into the water rolled the tricycle.

She sunk to a depth of four feet.

In a moment our friends were submerged.

The parrot and monkey flew up on top of a door to escape getting drowned, and as Fritz was the shortest, he found himself buried to his chin in the water.

Before our astonished friends recovered from their amazement, they felt the tricycle being dragged into deeper water.

They then swam, and held the emir up.

Had they remained standing they would have been drowned.

The game played upon them by the Wahhabees would have been effective enough to drown them like rats in a trap if Jack had not thought to say to Bings:

"Make the emir let them know who he is."

"Brilliant idea!" panted the actor.

He said a few words in Arabic to the chief, who thereupon began to yell to the natives a number of syllables that let them know they were drowning one of the sultan's great men.

What he said astonished the Wahhabees.

They lost no time in dragging the machine out of the basin again, and one of them yelled to the emir:

"You say you are a captive in there?"

"My life is in the hands of these Americans."

"In what way can we save you, oh Emir?"

"You can do nothing for me. When you attempt to injure

these people your just vengeance falls as heavily upon me as it does upon them. Therefore, have care how you act."

"Tell them to get out of the way and let us depart from here in peace," said Bings to him, in angry tones. "If they don't many of them will lose their lives."

"I shall obey you," assented the man.

He thereupon spoke to the natives again.

They obediently loosened the camel-tether from the tricycle, and Jack thereupon drove her toward the gate.

Criers had gone on ahead and they caused the guards to open the gates and permit the machine to pass out.

The drenching the tricycle got did her no harm.

She rushed out on the desert again and sped away toward the middle of the sea of sand.

When she was well under way Jack left the wheel in the Dutchman's care and walked back to the store-room.

He found the rear door swinging open.

Tim and Bings had turned in, and the monkey and parrot had descended from their elevated perch.

But the emir had vanished.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Jack. "He must have rolled himself out the open door, and let himself fall to the ground."

He glanced back over the course.

They were miles from Letan.

Nothing was seen of the emir.

It made Jack sigh regretfully, as he had been counting high upon the good use he could make of the man.

However, it was useless to bother about it, so Jack wisely dismissed the subject from his mind and examined the batteries.

They required replenishing.

He thereupon spent an hour opening them, and putting in strong chemicals with which he generated so much electricity.

Returning to the turret, he told Fritz about the emir's escape.

"Gone!" roared the young Dutchman, in startled tones. "Shiminey Christmas! Now we don't got some hostages you've depend on!"

"No, we will have to go it alone."

"You tink he oben der door himself?"

"Yes; it fastens with a spring latch. Consequently it could not fly open of its own accord. In an unguarded moment the cunning wretch must have risen to his feet beside the door, turned his back to it so he could reach the knob with his manacled hands, and thus got free."

Jack had formed a correct theory.

The way he described it was exactly the manner in which the escape of the Arab was made.

He glanced out the window.

The tricycle was passing a heap of bones.

It was the remains of a camel, and a short distance away lay the skeleton of a man.

The mode of their death so near civilization was to be seen in the numerous scorpions that infested the sands.

These creatures had doubtless bitten them and killed them.

Among them were some very poisonous spiders of venomous bite, much dreaded by the natives.

No sooner were they dead when swarms of big white ants came up from the ground and devoured the flesh from their bones.

The tricycle left the ghastly relics behind.

In the distance a lone palm arose from the desert beside a well, close by a large stone pyramid.

Jack pointed to it and said:

"There's the work of a good Samaritan."

"Vot you mean by dot, Shack?"

"If those wells were not sunk in various parts of these desert lands, many an unfortunate traveler would perish."

"Yah, I subbose so, but I hear dot dey trink deir camels up——"

"Oh, you mean they kill the camel and drink the supply of water it has laid in for its journey. Now——"

But at this point he was interrupted by a strange noise that came from the direction of the pyramid.

It was a horrible laugh in beastly tones.

"Ach Himmel! Vot dat vos?" gasped Fritz.

"It wasn't a human voice," said Jack.

"No; it sounded more like some beast, alretty."

Jack stared around, but saw nothing.

A brief silence ensued.

Then the demoniacal voice was heard again.

It was a prolonged barking shriek in a coarse voice.

That it came from the direction of the pyramid there could be no doubt, and with a perplexed look, Jack said:

"Steer the Flyer toward it, Fritz!"

"You vos investigate dot?"

"By all means."

Fritz turned the tricycle toward the pyramid.

She soon reached it.

Still nothing unusual was seen.

"How strange!" muttered Jack. "I never heard anything like it before."

"Vot you tink dot vos?" anxiously asked Fritz.

"It is impossible for me to say; but I'll find out."

He took a rifle, and as the tricycle came to a standstill near the base of the pyramid, he alighted.

The moon was shining above with startling brilliancy, lighting up the scene as if by sunlight.

Jack scanned the sand, but saw no footprints.

He then started to go around the pyramid, when suddenly he was startled by hearing a human voice shriek in English:

"Oh, God—oh, God! Am I to die this way?"

It was a wild and pathetic cry, fraught with deep misery, and the tones were evidently those of a man.

They sounded deep and smothered.

Yet they were near by.

"English!" gasped Jack.

Now he was thrilled through and through.

He ran around the pyramid.

Then a series of wild howls pealed out.

The sound was horrible, and a strange repulsive odor began to pervade the air.

A moment afterward the man began to scream much as if he were suffering great pain.

It curdled Jack's blood.

He still could not see the man or beasts.

Three sides of the pyramid were traversed, and Jack reached the last quarter without seeing anything.

Now, however, he observed an arched doorway in the base of the pyramid, from which the cries proceeded.

He rushed up to it, holding his rifle in readiness.

A dark passage appeared before him.

But without the slightest hesitation he plunged in, and rushed ahead into the dense gloom.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DUEL IN THE DARK.

The young inventor realized when he dashed into the gloomy vault that he was running a great risk.

Still the fearful cries nerved him up to a pitch of the most reckless daring, for he knew that a human being was inside the pyramid in sore distress.

It was so dark in the place that he could not see his hand before his face.

The screams of the man, and the howls of the beasts now rang in his ears with startling distinctness.

He paused a moment, and listened, to locate the position of the man, when a huge, hairy body brushed against his legs, and with a hoarse growl shot away in the gloom.

In a moment Jack located the man.

He then yelled:

"I'll help you!"

"A voice! A voice!" frantically cried the other.

"Keep on shouting so I'll know where you are."

"Yes! Yes!"

Bang! went Jack's rifle.

The ball had been fired away from the man.

Its explosion roared like a cannon in the place.

The momentary glare showed Jack that he was in a small, square room within the pyramid.

A number of huge, beastly forms were prowling about.

What they were he had no means of knowing yet, but he saw that they were very large.

The shot startled them.

A wild yell escaped them.

Then there sounded the rush of many feet.

One of the monsters struck Jack headfirst like a battering ram, and knocked him spinning to the floor.

Before he could get up several of the creatures rushed over his body, and he could hear them struggling to get out of the room at the door.

Before he could arise he felt one of the beasts seize his leg with its powerful jaws and bury its fangs in his calf.

A groan of pain escaped him.

He raised his rifle and dealt it a blow.

That caused it to relax its grip and recoil.

Jack then bounded to his feet, and fired several shots in rapid succession, taking care not to aim in the direction of the man to whom he had spoken.

As the last report pealed out he heard an unearthly howl, a huge body flew through the air, a pair of massive legs struck each of Jack's shoulders, and he felt the animal's face pressed so close to his own that its hot breath fanned his cheeks.

By good luck he had hold of his rifle yet.

Pressing it against the monster's body, he fired.

Down fell the beast upon the floor dead.

It did not move an inch.

Jack stepped back and listened intently.

Not a sound was heard in the room.

The man had ceased shouting and the last of the animals had fled from the rocky chamber.

Unable to see to do anything, and hearing the beastly, hysterical laughter outside, Jack felt his way along the wall to the passage.

Turning into it, he made his way out.

As soon as he reached the open air he saw a number of huge, ungainly animals, with low hindquarters covered with gray hair, scattered with stripes that formed a mane along its neck and back, from which its low bent head looked out fiendishly.

"Hyenas!" he muttered.

Now he knew what ferocious beasts he had been contending with, and shuddered to see their sooty muzzles daubed with blood.

It probably came from the man in the pyramid.

Jack opened fire on the ungainly beasts.

The tumult had reached Fritz's ears on the other side of the pyramid, and he now came dashing around on the tricycle.

As soon as he saw Jack firing at the hyenas, he joined in the fray, and so well were their shots aimed that not one of the beasts was left alive.

When the last one went down, Jack shouted:

"Bring the tricycle over to the door."

"Yah," replied Fritz, complying.

"Drive the searchlight into that passage."

"In vun minutes," answered Fritz, turning the Flyer around.

As soon as the light streamed in, it flooded every square inch of the interior with a dazzling glow.

Jack then rushed in.

Near the door he encountered the carcass of the brute he shot.

Lying upon the floor on the other side was the man weltering in a pool of blood.

He was fastened to the wall by manacles on his ankles and wrists that rendered him perfectly helpless.

Jack saw that he wore the uniform of a naval officer, and rightly surmised that he had come from some man-of-war that had been cruising along the coast.

He also realized that the man had been a prisoner who was secured in the pyramid for some unknown reason.

In order to find out why he had thus been incarcerated, the young inventor approached him.

Beside the man he paused.

A cry of horror escaped his lips.

He had arrived too late.

The poor fellow was dead.

He had been torn to pieces by the hyenas, and now presented a most terrible spectacle.

"Great Heavens! This was awful!" groaned Jack. "He had to lie there utterly helpless and passively submit to being devoured alive. A lieutenant in the United States navy, too."

Jack examined the corpse.

To his surprise he caught sight of an envelope clutched in the officer's hand, while beside the body lay a piece of pencil.

Jack took the paper and glanced at it.

On one side was written, "Mr. William Howard, U. S. Frigate Texas."

The other side bore some pencil writing in this form:

"Exploring coast of Gharah. Captured by Wahhabees and robbed. Carried here and imprisoned without food to starve to death. Should I perish and this record be found, please notify my commander.
W. H."

This short note explained all.

Jack turned sadly away.

He could not loosen the poor, mutilated body to give it decent burial, nor could he seal up the mouth of the pyramid.

"Wild beasts will finish his destruction," he muttered. "If we had only arrived a little earlier, we might have saved his life."

He left the room.

Returning aboard the Flyer, he found Tim and Bings up, and talking to Fritz about the cause of the disturbance.

Jack told them what he discovered.

He then showed them the note on the envelope.

"He was the victim of the stranglers," he said in conclusion. "If the means were at my command, I would wipe the Wahhabees all from the face of the earth."

"There isn't a worse tribe in Arabia," said Bings. "We are right in the midst of their country now—see!"

"Noddings would please me more as an addacks from dem," said Fritz. "I vant ter put in vun shot for dot poor feller vot Shack findt by dot byramids alretty."

"Shall I git the tricycle under sail, Jack?"

"You may as well. The stench from those hyenas taints the air so that I can scarcely endure breathing it."

The old sailor put the electric current into the motor, and the Flyer sped away from the scene.

In a few minutes they were far from the pyramid, and looking back, caught sight of a number of vultures in the air,

and swarms of wolves came flocking from the distant fertile lands.

These scavengers of the desert had scented the carrion from afar, and were intent upon devouring it.

Still, they were not as bad as the hyenas, for they will dig up the dead bodies of human beings from their graves to eat them.

In a short space of time they lost sight of the pyramid in the distance, and discovered, by the aid of their glasses, the hills embowering the city of El Janz.

Presently the tricycle left the sea of sand and ran into the valley between the two parallel ranges of hills that intersect the Crimson Desert from northeast to southwest.

Here there were some streams, patches of camel grass, and, in spots, the most luxuriant vegetation.

They had not far to go before they discerned the walled city on an eminence, amidst a fine oasis.

When the Flyer reached the foot of the hill she was seen.

The great gates swung wide open.

The next moment a troop of over one hundred horsemen came flying down the hill to meet her.

Along swept the Arabs, their spears and brazen shields glittering in the moonlight, their pennons flying, and the wildest yells of savage exultation escaping them.

At the head of the wild cavalcade rode a man brandishing a gleaming sword and urging the others on.

It was Abdallah Pasha.

Jack recognized the conjurer at a glance.

"A fight! A fight!" he cried. "Arm yourselves with grenades!"

Away hastened the others to obey.

The young inventor dauntlessly kept the tricycle going up the hill to meet his foes, and they rapidly neared each other.

A terrible combat with the stranglers was imminent, but our friends did not weaken, great as the odds were against them, for they had every confidence in themselves.

CHAPTER XV.

INVADING THE STRANGLERS' DEN.

The hundred Wahhabees sweeping down the hill toward the Flyer from their city of El Janz let a volley of lances fly.

In a moment the air was full of the weapons.

Many of them struck the tricycle, but could not pierce it.

The discharge of these weapons did not check the onward rush of the Arabs, nor did Jack stop the advance of the vehicle up the hill, for he was determined not to flinch.

He knew that the American consul to Turkey was imprisoned in that city, and was resolved to rescue him and win the government's reward of fifty thousand dollars.

It was not likely that Edwin Stewart was killed yet, even though Abdallah Pasha knew all about the plan to rescue him.

The conjurer kept in the lead of the attacking horde, and Jack felt confident that he had driven directly here to warn his friends as soon as they left Rijat.

Benjamin Bings recognized his old friend and yelled:

"Jigger me if that mug Pasha ain't with them."

"I see he is," replied Jack.

"Say!" roared Fritz, "should we fire dese grenades?"

"Not yet. Wait until we get in short range."

"Ay, ay!" said Tim. Here comes more lances."

The Wahhabees hurled a second volley.

But they did no more harm than the first.

It was now getting near daylight, for the moon was low down, and the first faint gray streaks of the dawn were seen in the eastern sky.

In a few moments the Flyer arrived within fifty yards of the riders.

"Fire!" shouted Jack.

Open flew three of the windows with a bang.

Then out went a volley of the grenades.

Deafening reports followed whenever they burst.

Clouds of dust and dirt shot up in the air, yells of pain escaped those of the stranglers who were struck, and a panic overwhelmed the horses, and they went up on their haunches.

In a moment the whole cavalcade was thrown in confusion and brought to a sudden and unexpected halt.

"Again!" shouted Jack.

Once more a volley flew out the windows.

The fusilade brought matters to a climax.

It demoralized the Wahhabees and drove them back in confusion.

The Flyer pressed on after them, and plunged in among the horses.

Scattering in all directions, they fled for their lives, followed by bomb after bomb, and explosion after explosion.

Every shell that burst sent a rain of iron fragments flying in all directions, each particle inflicting as much damage as a ball shot from a rifle.

Cut, pained and bleeding, the Arabs were soon in a dreadful condition, and although they returned the fire as best they could with arrows and spears, they were unable to reach our friends with their weapons.

Jack observed that the gates of the city were open.

He steered the engine toward them.

She had not far to go ere she reached the entrance.

Many of the dusky Arabs were upon the ramparts of the walls, yelling to the people in the city.

A few bombs flung up at them drove the rascals back and the tricycle dashed into the settlement.

It was a large place.

The sundried mud houses were square in shape, and but one story in height for the most part.

Ranged in rows, they formed narrow, muddy streets, through which scores of men, women and children were rushing in fear of the tricycle, for Jack and started the fire flying from the rims of the wheels and the point of the ram again.

"Bings, do you know anything about this place?" shouted Jack to the actor.

"Not a blessed thing."

"Where could we most likely find their prisoner?"

"In the house of one of the dignitaries."

There were no such things as prisons here, and Jack kept the machine going until they reached the center of the city.

Here he caught sight of several large buildings.

One of them was swarming with armed men, and he figured that they must have a potent reason for guarding this particular house so well.

The natural inference, therefore, was that there was something in the house which they designed to keep protected from our friends, and Jack quickly noted it.

"We must get into that building!" he yelled.

"Should we proke der doors down?" called Fritz.

"Yes. But I don't believe we can get the Flyer in there."

Bang! Bang! Bang! went several grenades against the door, and it was splintered to pieces.

Loud cries of woe and consternation pealed from the guards.

They rushed away, some of them shooting muskets at the tricycle as they ran, and Jack brought the machine to a stop.

She was opposite the shattered door.

Jack made his way back into the store-room.

Here he donned a metal suit, and armed himself.

Upon the back of the suit was a knapsack, containing a very powerful electric battery, to each pole of which he attached a wire.

To the ends of each wire he fastened an insulated carbon point.

"Fritz, join me!" said he.

"Vot you do, Shack?"

"I'm going through that house."

"Goot! I vos mit you, troo tin und tick."

The Dutchman attired himself like Jack.

In a few moments both were ready to go out.

"Guard the tricycle well!" said the inventor.

"Bet your life!" assented Bings.

"Come on, Fritz!"

"Look out!" cautioned Tim, warningly.

"Have no fear for us!" said Jack, confidently.

He then left the tricycle with Fritz.

They strode through the shattered door.

Hardly had they set foot within the building when a volley of arrows was shot at them from the furthest extremity of the place.

The copper points clicked against their metal suits, and the shafts snapped in two without doing any damage.

The two plucky fellows kept on.

A volley of stones and lances was then hurled at them, and Fritz was knocked down, while Jack leaped up against the wall.

A shout of exultation rang through the room.

It was followed by the rush of many sandaled feet.

Both quickly recovered.

A crowd was rushing toward them.

"Use your battery!" muttered Jack.

Their hands were insulated in rubber gloves.

Turning on the currents in their knapsacks, the batteries began to hum and buzz like circular saws in a mill.

Grasping the carbons, they brought the points together.

No sooner was this done when lurid streaks of fire flew off the ends, and darted in blinding flashes toward the Arabs; they paused, turned and ran away thoroughly terrified.

"After them!" cried Jack.

"Dey vos gone by der yard."

"If the prisoner is in here, they will rally around him."

The Arabs rushed into a square courtyard filled with plants, and having a fountain in the center.

From out of the rooms opening upon it rushed servants and other inmates of the household.

Following the guards, they flew to the back of the building.

Here a door was flung open and they left the yard.

In a comparatively short time not a soul but Jack and Fritz were left in the place.

"They haven't got the prisoner here," said the young inventor.

"Den coom back by der dricycles."

"Don't board her. Caution Tim to follow us."

Back to the street they went, but no sooner had they passed out the door when they saw the Flyer rushing along the street.

The cause of her flight soon became apparent.

Many of the stranglers had mounted to the roofs of their dwellings and were hurling rocks down on the tricycle.

Unable to stand the bombardment, the inmates of the vehicle had discreetly started her off to escape the fusillade.

"Shiminey Cripps, dey leaf us by our fates!" growled Fritz.

"It's as much as our lives are worth to follow them," said Jack.

"Just ve stay here, den?"

"No. We can leave by the rear door."

Leading the way, Jack rushed out in the other street.

It was thronged with people, all of whom were rushing toward a large mosque with a huge, round dome.

Following them, Jack and Fritz soon reached the mosque,

On a shed, in front of the building, was a chair in which a white man was tied with ropes.

A post rose in back of the chair against which his head rested.

Through a hole in the post, in back of the man's neck, the noose of a strong cord was passed, the loop encircling his throat.

Both ends of the cord were tied to a piece of wood.

A dark browed man in a white shirt, covered by a black cloak with crimson silk embroidery, and a reffee yeh (head-handkerchief) girt by a white band, was twisting the stick.

Each turn tightened the cord around the bound man's throat, and he was slowly strangling to death before the crowd.

"Bismillah!" (in God's name) the priest was yelling.

A thrill of horror passed over Jack.

"They are murdering that man," he gasped.

CHAPTER XVI.

TIM GETS TRIPPED UP.

Whiz! went a bomb from Jack's hand.

It was fired with great accuracy and struck the strangler.

A report followed and the murderer was blown to fragments.

The cord he had been twisting unwound, and the pressure relaxed from the throat of the victim.

Jack had seen that he was a white man in a traveler's costume.

He wore a gray beard and mustache and had dark hair.

While he was recovering from the choking the crowd surged along up the narrow street, yelling and cursing our friends.

Tim brought the tricycle to a pause in front of the mosque and Bings hurled several bombs after the retreating crowd to keep them moving.

Into the mosque dashed Jack.

He rushed up a flight of stairs to the roof.

Out came his knife and he severed the prisoner's bonds.

"Follow me!" he exclaimed.

"Saved!" cried the man, gladly.

"Are you Edwin Stewart?"

"That is my name."

"Good! You are the man we came to rescue."

"At whose instigation?"

"The American government."

"Ah! You are an agent of my government?"

"I am; my name is Jack Wright."

They dashed down into the mosque, but now found their retreat cut off by a large crowd of the Arabs, who had swarmed in.

They were hurling missiles and firing shots at the men in the tricycle, who were then bombarding them.

Seeing Jack and the prisoner, they gave a shout, and some of them made a rush for the pair.

"Retreat!" Jack sung out.

"Back to the roof!" panted the consul.

"Yes; we can jump off."

Away they went, pursued by the screaming horde.

Upon reaching the roof they hastened to the edge, and then dropped down to the ground.

Unfortunately a crowd of the Arabs came out of the building just then, and Jack and his companion landed on top of them.

It knocked them flying.

The Arabs then recovered and pounced on them.

Up sprang Jack and the consul in a desperate mood.

"Fight for your life!" cried Jack.

He handed the consul a revolver.

"They'll never take me alive!" said the minister.

Then they opened fire on the stranglers.

In the midst of the struggle the tricycle rushed toward them and plunging into the gang scattered them.

"Git aboard quick!" roared Tim.

"Stop her!" replied Jack.

Then he, Fritz and the consul went aboard.

Once they were safe inside Bings and the consul met.

They were old friends, and heartily shook hands when they had recognized each other, and the actor cried:

"You don't how how tickled I am to see you again."

"Am I to thank you for this?" asked the smiling consul.

"No. Not on your tin-type. Jack Wright is the one. But say——"

"What now?"

"How have they used you here?"

"Horribly. Still they kept me alive, and that is saying a good deal. I have been a prisoner in that mosque most of the time since they captured me and brought me here."

"I'll give you the programme of what we did later on."

Just then there was not much time for explanations, for the machine was racing for the gates, through a pelting shower of missiles that came from the roofs, the streets and everywhere.

She was pounded all over, much as if she were going through a battle in civilization.

Presently she reached the gate by which she entered.

Here a large party of the Wahhabees, armed with muskets, disputed her passage, and a rattling passage at arms ensued.

The natives could not withstand the destructive fire poured into them, and soon retreated.

Out of the city rushed the tricycle, and a crowd ran after her.

They pelted the Flyer with stones and other missiles, their excited cries ringing out furiously.

"By heavens, we've beaten them!" cried Jack, glancing back.

"Yer couldn't a done a riskier thing than to run inter ther werry heart o' thar city ter do this!" said Tim.

Just then the consul joined them.

And while the tricycle was running away, he and Jack had a conversation in which everything was explained.

By the time they finished it the sun had risen.

A shout from Bings then startled them:

"Jigger me, if we ain't being chased by riders from the city."

"Oh, they'll never catch us!" laughed Jack.

He added speed to the wheels, and away the Flyer tore over the desert like a lightning express train.

Fast as the Arabs' horses came along, they were so quickly distanced that in a very few minutes they were left out of sight far behind the flying vehicle.

Mr. Stewart proved to be a pleasant, intelligent man, and keenly appreciated what had been done to rescue him.

He was very much amazed at the peculiar tricycle, and, having had its mechanism explained, readily understood it.

Indeed, his opinion was that it would revolutionize the motive power of all kinds of vehicles in the future.

He gave them a graphic account of his life among the Arabs, and said he intended to write a book about it if he were fortunate enough to reach home again.

Fritz then prepared breakfast.

Having partaken of the meal, Jack and his friends held a consultation about their future movements.

"You want to go back to the coast now, don't you?" asked Bings.

"Exactly, and I think we had better head for Mecca," said Jack.

"Are you aware that the desert swarms with roving bands of the Wahhabees and Bedouins everywhere?"

"Yes; I've seen evidence of that."

"If we meet them, me boy, it means fight—see?"

"Just what I expect."

"Then I'll map a course."

He did so, and the tricycle was turned out of the valley.

She soon left the range of hills behind, and ran out on the crimson desert again.

It was necessary to steer by the compass here.

Tim took possession of the wheel, and Mr. Stewart went on duty with him, while the rest employed themselves about the engine.

"She runs without a hitch, I see," said the consul.

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the old sailor. "But then yer can't trust appearances."

"How do you mean, my friend?"

"Why, sir, I once got tooken in by doing that."

"In what way?" curiously asked Mr. Stewart.

"Yer see, it happened while I wuz aboard o' ther old frigate Wabash in ther navy," said Tim. "One night we wuz anchored off ther coast of Afriky when a storm struck us, parted our cable, an' blowed us out ter sea."

"Quite an unexpected occurrence."

"That it wuz, sir. Well, as I wuz sayin', ther fust thing that we knowed, ther masts went by ther board, an' we wuz blowed along, almost wrecked. Twenty days arterwards we wuz in a frozen sea, but couldn't git no reckonin'. I allowed as we couldn't git no further south without goin' north'ard again——"

"I don't quite comprehend."

"Why, sir, we'd reached ther South Pole."

"How do you know you did?"

"'Cause I seen it."

"Saw what?"

"Ther south pole, o' course. Thar it wuz stickin' in ther icy ground, a great big flag pole, with a Eskimo flag on it——"

"Bosh! I say——"

"Awast a moment! Ter continer: Ther minnit I sot eyes on that ere flag I clumb up an' nailed ther stars an' stripes thar, an' tore ther other one down. That got ther natives mad, an' while I wuz up ther pole they got a ax an' chopped ther pole down, an' me with it——"

"You must have had quite a fall!" said the consul, with an amused look, for he now realized that Tim was lying.

"Oh, no," replied Tim. "D'yer s'pose I waited ter git ther ribs banged out o' me? Not much. I jumped afore ther pole fell, landed in ther sea an' swum back fur ther frigate, while them lubbers wuz lookin' fer my crushed remains ten feet under ther sile."

"Oh, ho," laughed Mr. Stewart, his amusement increasing.

"Yaas, sir. Waal, as soon's they diskivered wot I done, they gits in thar boats an' comes fer us. Seein' as thar wuzn't no use o' staying thar an' killin' ther poor fellers off, we hoisted sail an' glided away home'ard bound, leavin' them standin' in ther boats cussin' like pirates——"

"But, my dear sir, you just told me that the storm had dismantled your ship!" expostulated the consul.

"Did I?" gasped Tim, with a guilty start.

"Of course you did. Now, how in thunder could you raise your canvas and sail away if your masts went by the board in the storm?"

"I'm blest if I know," feebly replied Tim.

"Then I'll leave you to solve the problem," laughed Mr. Stewart.

And so saying, he went out, leaving Tim looking so mortified and disgusted that his face was a study.

The old sailor took a chew of plug.
He scratched his head and pondered.
Then he growled:

"Blast my buttons, wot did I want'er say ther frigate wuz dismantled fer? I'd oughter knowed as I'd have ter sail her away from ther South Pole agin."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOLDING UP A CARAVAN.

On the following morning, while Jack stood alone in the wheel-house, Mr. Stewart joined him and asked:

"In what direction are you steering, Mr. Wright?"

"Heading for Adhud," replied the young inventor.

"You intend to run along the camel trail to the westward then?"

"I was going to turn along the base of the Hareek mountains."

"Then I have a plan to propose to you."

"And what is that?"

"To make an effort to secure a treasure."

"What treasure do you allude to?"

"The result of the robberies of the stranglers."

"Have they been amassing a treasure?"

"Yes—for years."

"Do you know where it is kept?"

"I do."

"How is that?"

"I'll explain. The Wahhabees are a regularly organized gang of thieves, who plunder everyone traversing this crimson desert. Their chief is a miniature king. He has officers stationed everywhere to keep the men banded and in subjection. When a robbery is made, the spoils are turned into gold by selling, and one-half the profits goes to a general fund. The treasure house of the band is in the Hareek Mountains."

"I see. You suggest an attack upon it?"

"Yes. If we should succeed in gaining possession of the place, we could get a fabulous treasure from it."

"I'll lay the plans before my friends."

"Very well."

"Have you seen the place?"

"Once. I was taken there by the chief of El Janz, who was afraid a descent was to be made on their stronghold by some Turkish soldiers."

"Describe the treasure city!"

"It is an ancient place embowered in a valley among the mountains, and contains a guard of about one hundred men, who are supposed to take care of it. The treasure, as I heard say, is locked in a subterranean vault under the mosque."

"Could you pilot us to the place?"

"Very easily, once we reach the mountains."

Jack left the wheel in Stewart's hands.

Going back to his friends, he told them what was said.

Everyone was for going.

There is a certain fascination about a large treasure which arouses a burning desire in most everybody to possess it.

Man will risk life and liberty to enrich himself, and our friends were no exception to the general rule.

Besides the wish to make the trip pay well, they all were of such an adventurous turn of mind that the plan almost assured them of exciting times.

"Then you will go?" asked Jack, in conclusion.

"Ay, ay."

"Yah."

"Why, cert."

"Very well. I'll tell Stewart."

Jack returned to the turret.

The consul glanced at him questioningly.

"Well?" he asked.

"They want to venture."

"But they understand the risk?"

"Of course."

"If we succeed we will gain heavily."

"The stranglers' treasure must be large."

"Very. It has been multiplying for years."

"What disposition is to be made of it?"

"There is a plot now being formed among the chiefs to seize it, divide it among themselves, without the rest of the tribe knowing anything about it, and leave their minions without their share," replied Stewart.

"Then we will get there just in time?"

"Very likely," the consul laughed.

The scheme to forestall and outwit the conspirators pleased Jack, and he peered ahead and smiled grimly.

It would not take them out of their way to accomplish the purpose they had in view.

As Jack glanced out, he suddenly caught sight of several distant horsemen going along rapidly in the direction the Flyer was taking.

Pointing at them, he exclaimed:

"See there! What does that mean?"

"Queer to see an Arab riding so hard in the sunlight."

"Would they travel that way for nothing?"

"No. You can depend they have an object in view."

"What can it be?"

"I can see nothing ahead there."

"Neither can I. Let me try my glass."

He scanned the men with the powerful lens, and saw that they were some of the tribe with whom he had trouble.

They were riding at breakneck speed.

Jack tried to see further ahead.

He dimly observed some moving figures.

Studying them closely, he finally observed that they were camels.

"They are chasing a caravan!" he exclaimed.

"Intent upon levying tribute, I presume."

"Of course, unless they have a shiek's pass."

"If they had they wouldn't fly before the horsemen."

"Very true. It looks to me as if there would be a fight."

"Unless we interfere."

"I intend to stop them."

"Good, sir!"

Jack grasped the wheel.

He pulled the battery lever.

More speed was added, and the Flyer rushed along over the sand so rapidly that she began to overhaul the horses.

"We are gaining!" cried Stewart.

"Fast. But they will soon reach their victims."

"Before we can overhaul them?"

"I fear so."

"Some of them may perish then."

"Heaven help them, if the stranglers reach them first."

So intent were the Arabs upon their work that they never once thought of looking back.

In a few minutes the caravan was in plain view.

It was then seen to contain ten camels, heavily laden.

They were flying for their lives, their owners and drivers running beside them, and belaboring them with their sticks.

But the pace they set was very slow compared to that of their bloodthirsty pursuers.

The increased speed of the tricycle brought Tim, Fritz and Bings into the turret to see what the reason was.

All were excited in a moment.

"Donner vetter! Dere vos vork for us!" cried Fritz.

"Ay, an' thar's only half a dozen o' ther Arabs," Tim exclaimed.

"It seems to me," remarked Bings, "that every blamed ham we strike on this desert is a thief."

"Very few of this tribe gain their living any other way," Jack replied.

They armed themselves.

In a few minutes more they could hear the Arabs yelling at the caravan drivers to stop.

A chorus of frightened cries came back.

The tricycle was about a quarter of a mile behind them when the rascals reached the caravan.

Our friends were wild with impatience to reach them, and although the tricycle was running swiftly, she seemed to them to go at a snail's pace.

Just as the robbers reached their victims, there sounded a sharp snap under the Flyer.

Her speed suddenly slackened.

Then she came to a pause.

Jack and his companions were startled.

Cries of vexation escaped them.

"Something has broken," exclaimed Jack.

He hastily shut off power and grasped a rifle.

"Wot wuz it?" gasped the sailor.

"I have no time to see. Follow me."

They made a rush for the door, and sprang to the ground.

Jack ran toward the Arabs.

They were then fighting fiercely.

"Give the thieves a volley!" cried the inventor.

In a moment the five had their rifles to their shoulders.

The range was long, but when they fired several of the Wahhabees were hit.

The fight ceased for a moment, and the natives glanced around and saw the tricycle and our friends.

Jack and his companions, as soon as they fired, had started on a run for the combatants.

The thieves recovered from their surprise.

Upon seeing how few there were in the attacking party, they uttered a fierce shout, and drove their ponies toward the rescuers at full speed.

Brandishing their spears and yelling furiously, they swept along, intent upon riding the white men down.

The attacked caravan got in motion again.

Jack paused.

"Don't flinch!" he cried to his friends.

They grouped themselves around him.

A volley of lances were hurled at them.

They were forced to scatter or get pierced.

Fortunately they dodged the missiles.

Then Jack's order rang out:

"Fire, boys!"

They discharged their rifles at the Arabs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TREASURE HOUSE.

But two shots rang out.

They were the last in the weapons wielded by Jack and his friends, and in their haste they had failed to bring any extra cartridges with them.

A feeling of dismay assailed them when this discovery was made, for they had no other weapons at hand.

One of the Arabs fell wounded.

A horse was shot from under another.

Meantime the four remaining men pressed hotly on.

"Don't yield!" exclaimed Jack. "Club your rifles."

His friends took courage.

On came the horses thundering upon them.

In a moment more the beasts were dealt such terrific blow with the rifles that one of the weapons was broken.

Having hurled their lances, the Arabs had drawn their bent swords, and half rising on the backs of their mounts, they aimed fierce blows at the heads of the young inventor's party.

It was fortunate that the horses had been hit.

They reared up and scattered.

Down crouched our friends, and as the steeds plunged on, the hissing sword blades flew flashingly by their heads.

In another instant the Arabs were past.

Fritz and Mr. Stewart had been trampled.

The hoofs of Arabian ponies are seldom shod.

It was mainly owing to this reason that no serious damage was done to the Dutchman and consul.

When they arose they felt sore and bruised, but did not complain of their injuries.

Indeed, the excitement prevented them from suffering the pain they would otherwise have felt.

"Come for the tricycle," said Jack.

"Can't reach her!" said Tim.

"Why not?"

"Cause them lubbers is atween us an' her."

"Someone must get weapons an fire on them."

"Trust me for that!" cried Bings, whose rifle was broken. He made a rush for the Flyer.

Just then the Arabs turned their steeds.

Back towards our friends dashed the stranglers with the most desperate courage, and their swords held ready to strike.

Jack resolved on a desperate course.

"Charge on them!" he cried.

The rest fearlessly obeyed.

While the horses were flying toward them they ran for the horses.

The effect was magical.

The intelligent beasts remembered our friends on account of the blows that had been dealt them.

And they had no desire to repeat the punishment.

Consequently they bolted.

In all directions.

At a run!

That cleared the way for Bings.

He reached the tricycle and boarded her.

In one minute more he stood in the window of the turret with a gun to his shoulder, blazing away.

Down went another horse, throwing its rider.

The other three dashed away furiously and soon got out of range, while the men who were dismounted ran after them.

Although Bings kept on firing, he failed to hit them.

The dismounted men reached their companions at a safe distance, and were taken up on the horses with them.

All sped away.

"That's the end of them," said Jack.

"Ay, ay. They're a-skeered!" Tim commented.

"Shall we return to the tricycle?" asked Stewart.

"Might as well, as we can't catch them."

"Dere dot caravans go by der oder directions!" observed Fritz.

"They're safe enough, now," said Jack. "Who's hurt?"

"None wounded," said Stewart. "But Fritz and I were trampled."

They hastened back to the Flyer.

"Jigger me if I ain't a beaut!" cried Bings, smilingly, when they got aboard. "Talk about your bull's eyes. Oh, mamma, didn't you see me soak them? Going to start a new combination right away. 'Bings, the bull's eye.' How's that for a card?"

“Bet your life I’d play to a full house every night and no dead-heads in it, see?”

“Lordy, that shootin’ wuzn’t nuthin’ ter wot I once did when I wuz in ther navy,” smiled Tim, contemptuously.

“Beat me, hey?”

“Waal, I reckon.”

“How?”

“It happened this way: We wuz bombardin’ a town five miles from shore with our port battery. Waal, sir, thar wuz a gunner in that ere town wot wuz comin’ pretty close to us with his shots an’ no one could hit him ter stop his firin’. Jist then wot should I do but offer to nail him——”

“Ah! You hit him?”

“O’ course I did. He wuz planted behind a breastwork o’ iron, bricks and cobble stones forty foot thick, whar no one could see him. But a idea suddenly came inter my mind how I could git ther drop on ther lubber.”

“Well, what did you do, old man?”

“Do? Why, I took a can o’ dynamite an’ a keg o’ ten penny nails, rammed ’em into a gun an’ aimed my gun. Then I fired, an’ blow me if that ’ere charge didn’t sail clear through that ’ere breastworks, land in ther middle o’ ther fort an’ bust. The ixplosion shook ther ground we wuz standin’ on so hard that a beer saloon in back o’ us caved in. That ’ere shot sir, blowed ther enemy’s ship clean up in the air forty miles, an’ when it came down in ther sea again thar wuzn’t enough left——”

“Whoa—whoa there! Mild up, Bolivar—mild up!” yelled Bings.

“Wot!” gasped Tim.

“That was a great act of yours, wasn’t it?”

“A bang-up shot,” proudly said Tim.

“The dynamite didn’t burst in the gun then?”

“No, sir,” said Tim, positively.

“Nor when it hit the breastworks?”

“Lor’, no. How could it bust in ther fort if it did?”

“Wasn’t you on your ship when you fired the shot?”

“Didn’t I say so? Whar d’yer reckon I wuz—in a balloon?”

“You said the ground shook under you until a baby brewery fell in——”

“I meant——”

“Then you said the shot hit the enemy’s ship.”

“I meant——”

“Shut up, me boy! Wait till I’m through. Then you said——”

But Tim fled.

He couldn’t stand it.

He saw where the errors came in.

A roar of laughter escaped Bings.

He then went outside and joined Jack, who was examining the mechanism of the tricycle to see what had broken.

This was easily ascertained.

It proved to be the rod connecting the wheels with the motor.

It had broken at the pivot.

Considerable work was necessary to repair it.

Indeed, it was lucky for the young inventor that it could be repaired at all.

Then all lent a hand and set to work.

But it was hard to work in that intense heat.

Yet it had to be done.

The whole day was spent ere the Flyer was fit to use.

Going aboard, they had their supper and started off.

Everyone but Jack and Stewart turned in.

They remained in the turret, steering the tricycle for the mountains, and toward midnight they were sighted.

“There’s the place,” said the consul, pointing away to the

northwest. “We will have to get into the valley through those two cone-shaped hills, Mr. Wright.”

The Flyer sped along over the sand, and within an hour she reached the point just designated.

Jack found the valley filled with the red sand.

Far ahead he discovered a mass of tall, precipitous rocks, rising in the middle of the place.

“Among those rocks, you say?” asked he.

“Yes. It was called Scla. The aboriginal inhabitants were named the Horims, or cave-dwellers. The ruins stand in a small, open, irregular basin, half a mile square, through which a brook runs. We will have to make our entrance by means of a ravine called the Sik (shafe).”

He pointed out the road to the chasm.

Jack brought the Flyer up to it shortly afterwards.

When the tricycle passed in they found that it narrowed to a width of no more than ten feet in places, while the rocky walls of red sandstone towered to a height of 350 feet above them.

Hardly a ray of light pierced the gloomy gorge.

It was paved by the ancient inhabitants of Scla, but brilliant oleanders now covered the old pathway.

All along the face of the rocky walls were rows of cave-tombs hewn out of the solid stone, and ornamented with facades.

These tombs were originally dwellings, and afterwards made sepulchers.

Some of the ancient houses had fallen to pieces.

When the Flyer ran into the basin, however, Jack saw that some of the buildings were yet standing.

Mr. Stewart pointed out the largest one.

“That is called El Kluzneh—The Treasure House—by the ancients,” said he, “and the natives firmly believe that buried somewhere in its sacred enclosure lie the treasures of Pharaoh. It faces the mouth of this gorge, and was once a Selanese temple.”

“And is that the building where the Wahhabee’s treasure is?”

“Yes. It is an almost impregnable fortress, and well guarded.”

“Then call up the boys, and we’ll see if we can’t get into it.”

The consul left the turret, and the tricycle ran ahead until she reached the treasure house.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EXCITING CHASE.

The treasure house was surrounded by a massive wall, flanked by square towers, forming a hollow square.

It stood upon an elevation reached by a slight hill, which, in places, showed that it was once a flight of steps cut from the rock.

The whole of the wall and towers and the edifice within were built of the same material—a compact, grayish colored marble, hewn to the required shape with the utmost nicety.

Upon the surface of the stones were cut numerous inscriptions in Himyaritic characters.

The approach of the machine had not aroused any demonstration beyond frightening a number of birds that flew up in the air, uttering strange cries.

It looked to Jack as if the place was deserted.

Still, appearances are sometimes treacherous, he argued.

Having brought the Flyer to a pause, he joined the rest.

They put on their metal suits, Tim’s and Fritz’s having electric lamps.

Having armed themselves, they now took great care to see that their weapons were loaded.

"There is only one way to get in," said Mr. Stewart. "It is by means of yonder gateway."

"We can easily shatter it," Jack exclaimed.

"Jigger me if I like this silence, me boy," said Bings, in uneasy tones. "It looks bad. These natives ain't the quiet kind. Therefore I'm afraid of danger ahead."

"Belay wi' your nonsense. I don't reckon as thar's a soul in ther place," said Tim, taking a fresh chew of plug.

"Perhaps not," the consul dryly remarked, "but it isn't very likely that they would go away and leave a huge treasure unguarded for even a moment."

"Come!" interposed Jack. "W'll soon find out."

They sallied from the tricycle, locked the door, and filed up to the porderous gate in the wall.

Jack pressed against it, and to their surprise it swung open, exposing the courtyard, in which stood the temple.

No man or beast was seen.

The same oppressive silence prevailed everywhere.

"I'll lead the way, as I'm acquainted with the premises," said the consul.

He did not go near the main entrance, to everyone's surprise.

Instead he turned to the right.

They all kept close to the wall in the shadow.

In this manner they glided around to the rear of the building.

Mr. Stewart then went toward a small door.

It was not fastened.

They passed into a corridor.

At the extreme end they now observed a lantern.

It stood near the great front entrance, and by its dim light they saw a number of men quietly ranged against the wall.

Everyone paused.

There was a room close by into which they silently glided.

"A trap!" muttered Mr. Stewart.

"Yes. They detected us coming, I presume, and were waiting for us to come in. They then would have fallen upon us and would have killed us without mercy."

"We will have to get the best of them."

"I think I know a way, but I am so lame from being trampled that I cannot carry it out."

"What was your plan?"

"To lure them into a room and lock them in."

"How can it be done?"

"If a good runner attracts their attention, they will rush after him. He must then go into the doorway on the other side of the hall. They will follow. That door can be locked on the outside by a crossbar. In back of the room is a door leading to a ladder, by means of which entrance can be made to the cellar. The ladder can be moved once the bottom is reached. They won't be able to follow. We will then have them in a trap."

"I will try that scheme," said Jack, promptly.

No time was lost in carrying out the consul's plan.

Jack left the room, and passing down the hall, he reached the doorway mentioned by the consul.

The waiting men heard his footsteps and saw him very indistinctly in the gloom, but made no effort to attack him, as they probably imagined that he was one of them.

As he paused opposite the door, however, one of them called in Arabic:

"Who goes there?"

Jack did not understand what he said.

But he instinctively realized that it was a challenge.

With one accord they began to jabber, for they knew at once that he was a stranger.

Then they ran for him.

Jack gave the door a push.

It failed to open and admit him to the room.

"Jingo!" he gasped.

Then he shoved harder.

If he could not get in they would reach him.

Their plans would be frustrated at the beginning.

The second push forced the door open, and he plunged in to the room.

High up the wall, near the ceiling, there was a window.

It admitted a flood of moonlight.

By its mellow light Jack saw the second door across the vacant apartment of which Mr. Stewart had spoken.

He rushed for it.

Behind him he could hear the Arabs coming pell mell.

Reaching the door, he pulled it open.

There was a black yawning pit on the other side of it.

Hardly had he seen it when his pursuers rushed into the apartment, yelling like a legion of fiends.

Jack stooped down and felt for the ladder.

Now he found it.

Pulling the door shut, he quickly descended.

Everything was wrapped in dense gloom.

He could not see an inch ahead.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

Jack was in a most trying position, for at any moment the men prowling through the cellar were apt to encounter him.

Shortly his friends joined him, and the electric lights were turned on. They saw a lot of the Arabs on the other side. Jack shouted:

"Go ahead. We must drive them out!"

A volley was discharged, and the Arabs howled as several of them were wounded by the bursting bullets.

They ran for the stairs and mounted them.

After them rushed our friends, for, having the advantage so far, they realized that all their future success depended upon keeping it, and they drove the Arabs up the stairs.

Reaching the hall, they pursued them through it to the big front door, out of which the guards rushed in a panic.

Shot after shot was fired at them.

Through the valley they ran to the defile.

Here they sped away for the desert.

Jack and his companions paused.

They had vanquished the last of the horde.

One man could easily hold the pass against the entire gang of fugitives, so he said to Bings:

"You remain here on guard."

"I shall, me boy. But the rest?"

"We will return to get the treasure."

"Ay, ay! That's ther talk," said Tim.

They lost no time now, for every moment was precious as long as the way was clear. They procured some bombs from the Flyer.

Returning to the temple, they descended to the cellar.

Mr. Stewart led the way to the end of the place.

In the stone wall there was a huge, nail studded door.

"There is the entrance to the treasure chamber!" said the consul.

"Stand back and I'll blow it open!" Jack exclaimed.

The rest recoiled to a safe distance.

Jack then began to hurl the bombs at the door.

The splintered planks flew in all directions.

As soon as the breach was made they swarmed through.

They found themselves in a small, square stone chamber. It was filled with boxes, barrels, packages and bundles, which the adventurers burst open.

A treasure of great value was revealed.

It consisted of the finest Oman's camels' hair fabrics, covered with exquisite gold thread embroidery, masses of silver work, gold filigrees, packages of magnificent Persian Gulf pearls, wonderful onyxes, rich topazes and carnelians, and exquisite laces.

There was a wealth of imported articles of gold and an endless assortment of other valuables rifled from the caravans.

The Flyer was incapable of carrying more than a very small portion of this vast treasure away.

Our friends therefore selected the most valuable of the lot, and began to transfer it to the tricycle.

Several hours passed by before they had laden the tricycle with as much as she could possibly bear.

"Enough!" cried Jack at length.

"We don't could carry some more!" said Fritz.

"Shall we start?" asked Stewart.

"May as well."

"Wot a pity ter leave so much behind," regretfully said Tim.

"Don't be so grasping. We have got the choicest of the lot," Jack laughed, "and we have got enough here to richly repay us for our trouble. Let's start away before we have any more trouble."

They left the dark cellar.

Upon leaving the building, Mr. Stewart said:

"Haden't we better release the prisoners?"

"What for?" asked Jack.

"They may starve to death in that room."

"Oh, no. Their friends will return and release them."

"True. I had forgotten that possibility."

Boarding the Flyer, they were greeted by a shriek and a howl from Bismarck and Whiskers.

Bings was perched on the rocks at the mouth of the defile with a rifle in his hands, keeping guard.

None of the Wahhabees had ventured back to disturb him, however, and the tricycle ran through the valley.

Bings came down from his perch when they reached him, and going aboard, eagerly feasted his eyes upon the treasure.

Jack then ran the machine through the defile.

When she reached the open valley the light of day had broken.

Far away on the rocks they saw the guards, whom they had driven out of the temple, closely watching them.

Fritz served breakfast.

By the time it was consumed the Flyer had passed from among the Hareek Mountains to the crimson desert again.

"By following the camel route from Bahhileh to Dhat Irk we will arrive within fifty miles of Mecca," said Mr. Stewart.

"That's the best plan," asserted Jack, "for we can pass by there and probably get a vessel at Yembo on the Red Sea."

This plan was carried out.

They dared not stop at Mecca, as the authorities there might have given them trouble on account of the treasure.

A long journey to the coast followed.

In the course of time they came in sight of Mecca, when a caravan was encountered.

One of the horsemen accompanying it suddenly dashed head when the tricycle appeared in sight.

Jack and Bings were in the turret at the time.

A cry of surprise escaped the actor when he saw the Arab

"There goes Abdallah Pasha!" he cried.

In a moment more he fired at the man.

The Arab flung up his arms and fell from the saddle.

The whole caravan was thrown into confusion by the shot, as they feared an attack of thieves.

"You've killed him!" said Jack.

"No," responded Bings, as the Flyer passed the Arab. "He is only wounded. It will repay the wretch for the injury he has done to us in the past, me boy."

Jack saw that in passing that Abdallah was merely wounded, and when they had left the writhing rascal behind them, they saw the people of the caravan gather around him.

The rest entered the turret and learned what had happened. No one blamed Benjamin Bings.

They knew that Abdallah richly deserved the punishment, and came to the conclusion that he was on his way to civilization again, as he had carried out his intention to warn his friends of the coming of Jack to rescue the American consul.

They soon left the caravan out of sight behind.

Having reached Yembo, the tricycle was taken apart, and shipped with the treasure upon a vessel bound up the Red Sea, through the Suez Canal, to Alexandria in the Mediterranean.

No further adventure marred their homeward journey.

They sold the treasure in Egypt and realized a large sum, which was divided equally among all hands.

A steamer was then taken for New York.

Arrived there, Mr. Stewart parted with them and went to Washington to report what happened to him.

Bings went to Wrightstown with Jack, Tim and Fritz.

Here the tricycle was stored.

The government reward was promptly paid to Jack, and when it was divided the actor left our friends to embark in a successful theatrical enterprise in New York.

They never again heard anything about Abdallah Pasha, and concluded that he recovered from the wound and discreetly remained in Arabia.

Jack then reported to the commander of the Texas about the poor fellow he had seen killed in the pyramid by the hyenas, and the mystery surrounding his disappearance was cleared up.

After that the young inventor busied himself constructing another invention.

Tim and Fritz aided him in building it.

And the monkey and the parrot watched its construction from the cages into which they were put upon their return home.

A new story about the adventures of our friends in the invention in course of construction will soon follow this.

We must now leave the inventor, the sailor, and the Dutchman for a time.

THE END.

Read "THE ORPHANS OF NEW YORK," a Pathetic Story of a Great City, by N. S. Wood (the Young American Actor), which will be the next number (271) of "Pluck and Luck."

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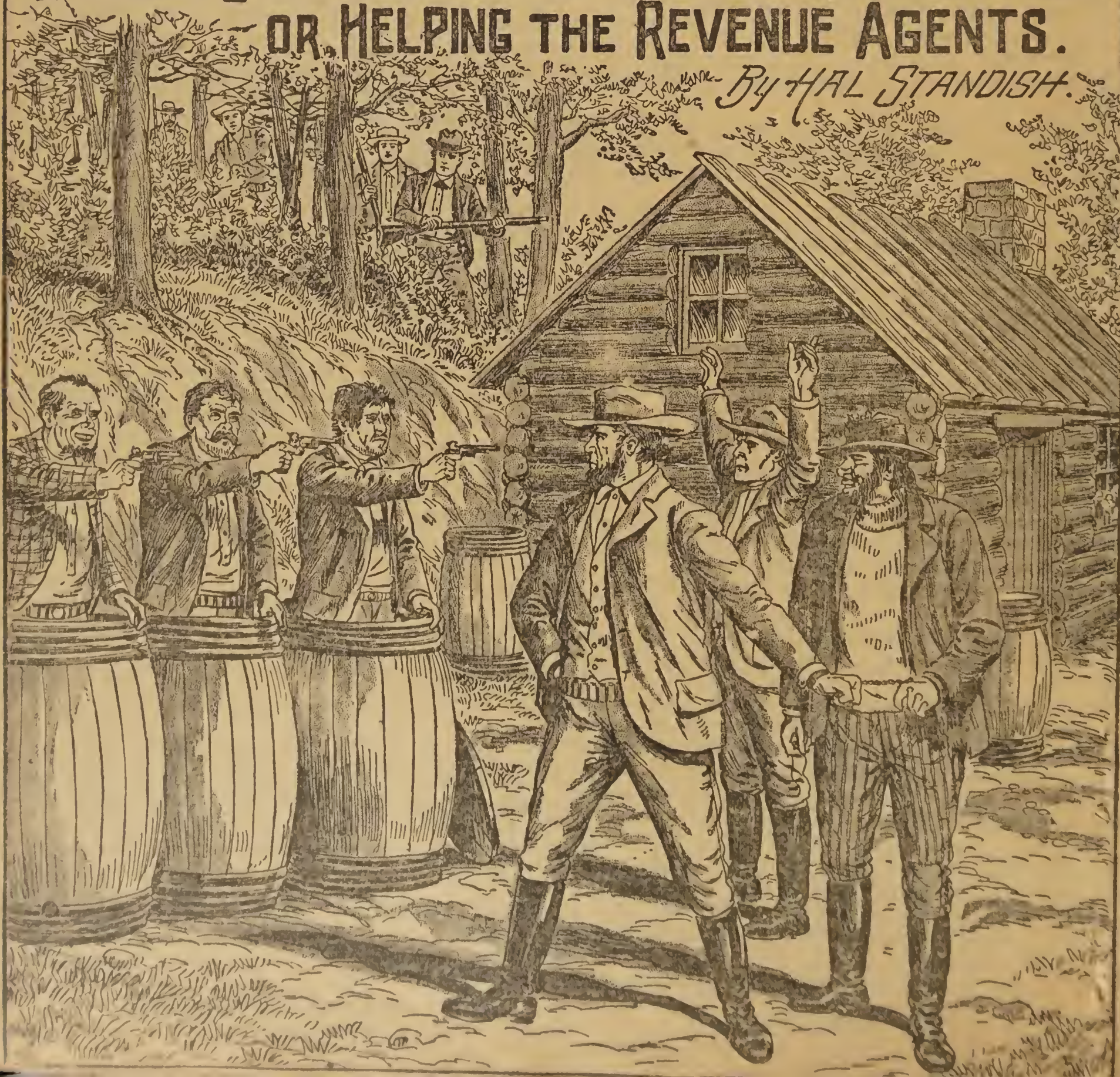
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